

NEW MACHINE MEANS FASTER RESULTS

By Erin Bishop (Ashburton Guardian- www.ashburtonguardian.co.nz) September 19 2011

Fewer blood samples will need to be sent to Christchurch for testing thanks to a new analysing machine in Ashburton.

The Architect Plus CI4100 bio chemistry analyser at Canterbury Health Laboratories Ashburton, at Ashburton Hospital, will see less time spent waiting for results.

Canterbury Health Laboratories Ashburton service head Judith Early said the laboratory's latest addition would have major benefits for both patients and general practitioners.

"It will be a lot faster turnaround because we will be doing a lot more tests here on site," Ms Early said.



The new machine was capable of testing for things like sodium, potassium and glucose levels, and kidney and liver function.

One of the big tests which had in the past always needed to be done in Christchurch, was cholesterol. But that could now be done in Ashburton.

The new analyser took a week to set up and while it has been used this week, it's yet to have its IT component set up. When that was done, results would be sent straight to doctors.

And in many cases, the earlier a result was known, the better.

Tests required to go to Christchurch had gone in one of four daily courier runs in the past. If a person came in first thing in the morning and their test was sent away immediately, the results could be available after lunch, but the results from samples analysed in Ashburton could be known within an hour.

Ms Early said for some patients that could mean the difference between being admitted to hospital, or not, or being discharged from hospital, or not.

Some specialist tests would still need to be done in Christchurch.

Having the new analyser also meant that Ashburton could now back-up Christchurch because they had the same, modern equipment.

Christchurch's laboratories had been hit hard by the city's earthquakes, with two of the private laboratories in the quake's red zone.

The Ashburton laboratory's old analysing machine will be sent away and refitted before being sent to a new home.

Pictured: Canterbury Health Laboratories Ashburton service head Judith Early and her staff are looking forward to performing a wider range of tests, and giving patients earlier results, thanks to a new blood analyser.