



# Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center

## DEPARTMENT OF NURSING

### OPERATING ROOM

## POLICY AND PROCEDURE

**SUBJECT: PREPARATION OF AEROBIC, ANEROBIC AND GRAM STAIN CULTURES AND REQUISITIONS**

**Policy No.: OR83**  
**Supersedes: ALL**  
**Revised Date: 02/2016**  
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**Policy Statement:** All aerobic, anaerobic and gram stain cultures will be performed according to the following procedural steps.

**Purpose of Procedure:** To determine if infectious microorganisms are present in the surgical wound.

**Physician's Order Required:** Yes

**Performed by:** O.R. TECHNICIAN, RN, MD

**Equipment:** Aerobic, Anaerobic culture tubes and microbiology requisition slip

**Procedural Steps:**

- I. Aerobic, Anaerobic and Gram Stain Cultures
  - A. Scrub assistant checks expiration date of culture and examines for evidence of damage or leakage on ESwab collection tube.
  - B. Remove the swab applicator and hand to the Surgeon to obtain the specimen.
  - C. After the specimen is collected by the surgeon, the cap is removed from the tube and the swab containing the specimen is inserted into the tube.
  - D. Break the swab shaft at the breakpoint indicated by the colored line marked on the swab shaft.
  - E. Replace the cap on the tube and secure tightly.
  
- II. PROCESSING OF ALL SPECIMENS
  - A. Scrub assistant passes the culture tube with the prepared specimen to the circulating nurse.
  - B. With gloved hands, circulator removes waste material from the exterior of the culture tube with a hospital approved disinfectant.  
**KEY POINT:** This prevents cross contamination of personnel handling the specimen.
  - C. Circulator places patients ID label on microbiology requisition  
**KEY POINT:** This prevents errors in specimen identification.
  - D. Circulator writes exact anatomical location of specimen source on adhesive label and affixes to the culture tube.

- E. The circulating nurse must document the following on the microbiology requisition:
1. Adjacent to "unit" write patient's unit.
  2. For Gram stain write- "STAT"- and appropriate Operating Room phone number. Micro lab will call results directly to the Operating Surgeon.
  3. Exact anatomical location and type of specimen must be identified on line marked "specimen source".
  4. Check boxes marked "culture" and "sensitivity".
  5. Write preoperative diagnosis on appropriate line.
  6. Identify antibiotics patient is currently receiving and/or received during the surgical process.  
**KEY POINT:** This is required because antibiotics used may affect microorganism counts.
  7. Write accurate date in boxed marked "date ordered" and "time".
  8. Enter operating surgeon's name in boxes marked "ordered by" and "collected by".  
**KEY POINT:** This enables the technologist to clarify questions and obtain additional information expeditiously.
  9. Circulator writes own initials in box marked "written by".  
**KEY POINT:** The circulating nurse is accountable for completing the requisition accurately and can be directly contacted for questions and/or corrections.
  10. Write accurate date in box marked "date and time collected".  
**KEY POINT:** Because there are definite standards for time in culture incubation, date and time must be correct.
  11. The patient's unit is used to assure the laboratory report will ultimately be placed in the patient's medical record.  
**KEY POINT:** This is imperative to assure accurate diagnosis and effective treatment.
- F. When multiple cultures are prepared they must be numbered sequentially and identified accurately on microbiology requisition and adhesive label.  
**KEY POINT:** Each specimen must have a separate microbiology requisition and the numbered tubes must correspond with the numbers on the requisition.
- G. The circulator writes type of culture on Web periop documentation in space marked comments.
- H. The circulating nurse delivers the specimens to the designated area in the PACU and enters the following information in log book adjacent to the patient's name:
1. Identification of specimen.
  2. Circulator writes own initials beside log book entry.

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3. Micro lab staff will pick up specimens and sign received in the PACU lab book.  
**KEY POINT:** PACU staff will take the specimens to the microbiology lab at the end of shift if no one available to pick up.
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**Revised by:**  
Susie Choi, RN, BSN, CNOR

**References:**  
Rancho Laboratory Manual

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06/06 – Revised  
08/09 – Revised  
05/13 – Revised  
02/16 - Reviewed

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