



# Clinical Laboratory Department POLICY AND PROCEDURE

POLICY NUMBER: 1253

VERSION: 3

## SUBJECT: Specimen Collection for Microbiological Procedures

Specimen Source	Collection Procedure	Transportation and Storage	Specimen Acceptability
<b>Blood</b>	10 ml blood is aseptically collected into both aerobic and anaerobic BacT/ALERT bottles. Pediatric bottles for up to 4 ml blood are also available. 3 specimens 30 minutes apart yield the best results.	Transport to the Lab ASAP. Store and transport at room temperature.	Send to MLK.
<b>Bronchial Washings</b>	Place specimens in sterile containers. <b>Label each specimen with specific location from which it was collected.</b>	Transport to the lab within 30 min. of collection. Refrigerate at 2-8°C unless suspect fungal infection - then keep at room temperature.	Send to MLK. Specimen is unacceptable for anaerobic culture unless collected using a triple lumen brush.
<b>Catheter Tips</b>	Place in a sterile urine container. Foley cath tips are not suitable for culture.	Transport to the lab within 30 min. Do <b>not</b> refrigerate.	Send to MLK.
<b>CSF</b>	CSF is submitted to the laboratory in 3-4 sterile tubes. Tube 3 or 4 is used for cell count. The other tubes may be used for both microbiology and chemistry. At least 10 ml of CSF is required for culture for <i>M. tuberculosis</i> or <i>C. neoformans</i> .	Do <b>not</b> refrigerate. Bring to the lab ASAP. <b>Notify lab staff of arrival.</b>	Send to OVMC.
<b>Eye, Ear</b>	Swab the infected area using both swabs of the BBL Culture Swab with liquid Stuart's medium system. Crush the ampule in the bottom of the swab container, if swab so designed.	Transport to the lab ASAP. Do not refrigerate.	Send to MLK.
<b>Stool</b>	1) <b>C&amp;S</b> - Collect in Para Pak C&S collection kit	Specimens in transport kits must be delivered to the lab in a timely manner.	C&S - Para Pak stable for 96 hrs. . Stool is unacceptable for anaerobic culture <u>except</u> to recover <i>C. difficile</i> or <i>C. botulinum</i> . Send to MLK

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	<p>2) <b>O&amp;P</b> - For optimal recovery collect one specimen every other day in O&amp;P collection kit. Routinely a series of 3 O&amp;Ps are ordered. Cryptosporidia &amp; WBC may be processed off of the O&amp;P collection as well.</p> <p>3) <b>Fecal Fat</b> - Specimens are to be collected in a clean container or other clean tube.</p> <p>4) <b>Occult Blood</b> – Collected in Polymedco FIT Kit.</p>	<p>Must be tested within 14 days of collection.</p>	<p>O&amp;P - stable indefinitely. Unpreserved specimen should be processed within 24 hr of collection. Sent to Quest for testing.</p> <p>Sent to Quest for testing.</p> <p>Sent to MLK for testing.</p>
<b>Genital Tract</b>	<p><b>C&amp;S - vagina, cervix, bartholin cyst, cul-de-sac</b> - collect specimen in Culture Swab with liquid Stuart's medium. Crush preservative ampule in bottom of container, if swab so designed.</p> <p><b>C&amp;S - male urethra</b> - mini tip swab.</p> <p><b>IUD</b> – Send IUD in a sterile, preferably anaerobic (i.e. thioglycollate broth), container. Need to order anaerobic culture to r/o Actinomyces.</p> <p><b>Wet Mount</b> - Swab placed in tube of Diamond's media.</p>	<p>Transport swabs to Lab immediately.</p> <p>Specimen for Wet Mount must be kept at 35-37° C and delivered to the Lab immediately.</p>	<p>Set up within 2 hrs. Do <u>not</u> refrigerate.</p> <p>Specimen is <u>un</u>acceptable for anaerobic culture.</p> <p>Send to MLK.</p> <p>Keep Diamond's media at 35°C when not in transit to the lab. Specimen is stable for 72 hrs.</p>
<b>Joint Fluid Synovial Fluid</b>	<p>Aspirate fluid with a sterile needle and syringe. Remove needle and cap the syringe.</p>	<p>Deliver to the laboratory immediately. Do <u>not</u> refrigerate.</p>	<p>Send to MLK.</p>
<b>Nasopharyngeal</b>	<p><b>Use Culturette Mini-tip.</b> Swab deep into the nasopharyngeal passage. Patient should feel desire to sneeze. Crush ampule of preservative in lower portion of the container, if swab so designed.</p> <p>If R/O Pertussis is desired, must put 2 mini-tip culturettes into a single Regan-Lowe tube that has come to room temperature.</p>	<p>Store and transport at RT.</p>	<p>Culturette may be refrigerated up to 48 hrs. Specimen is <u>un</u>acceptable for anaerobic culture. Send to MLK.</p> <p>For Bordetella culture &amp; PCR, send to Public Health.</p>
<b>Rectal Abscess</b>	<p>Swab the infected site, using the Culture Swab with liquid Stuart's medium container and crush the preservative ampule in the bottom of the</p>	<p>Deliver to the lab ASAP.</p>	<p>Send to MLK.</p>



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	specimen with specific location from which it was collected.		
<b>Transtracheal aspirates</b>	Place specimens in sterile containers.	Transport to the lab within 30 min. of collection. <b>Do not refrigerate.</b>	Send to MLK.
<b>Urine</b>	<p><b>Clean Catch Midstream</b> - the patient must be given complete instructions for cleansing &amp; collecting this specimen. Instructions found in the urine collection sets are to be reviewed verbally with the patient.</p> <p><b>Catheterized specimens</b> allow for collection directly from the bladder. Urine specimens must never be taken from the holding bag. Place in sterile urine container.</p> <p><b>Suprapubic</b> needle aspiration from the bladder and urine sample collected during cystoscopy should be submitted in sterile container.</p> <p><b>See separate collection procedure for GC/Chlamydia nucleic probe testing.</b></p>	Transport to the Lab ASAP. Refrigerate at 2-8°C for no more than 24 hours, or transport in BD vacutainer urine tubes for culture and sensitivity.	<p>Send to MLK. Specimen is <u>unacceptable</u> for anaerobic culture except suprapubic or cystoscopy collections.</p> <p>Urine in BD vacutainer urine tube for culture and sensitivity are stable for 48 hrs at 4-35°C.</p>
<b>Wounds, Abscesses, Skin, Soft Tissue Lesions</b>	<p>The area should be thoroughly cleansed with an antiseptic agent prior to specimen collection.</p> <p>Obtain scrapings, aspirates or biopsies from the active margins of cutaneous or mucocutaneous ulcers. The preferred specimen is an aspirate collection of pus from under skin flaps or deep pockets using a syringe and needle. The stoppered syringe without the needle may be submitted to the lab for aerobic and anaerobic culture. Alternately, submit a culture swab with liquid Stuart's medium for aerobic culture or an anaerobic collection set for an anaerobic culture.</p> <p>A second swab is needed if Gram Stain is ordered.</p>	Transport to the lab ASAP. <u>Do not</u> refrigerate.	Send to MLK.
<b>Fungal Cultures</b>	Any source for fungal culture should be ordered as a fungal culture, with a source clearly stated in the order.	Transport to the lab ASAP. Do not refrigerate.	

**Reference:** Miller, J. Michael, *A Guide to Specimen Management in Clinical Microbiology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1999. ASM Press.

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<b>Approved By:</b> Brian Yee (PHYS SPEC PATHOLOGY)	
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<b>Revised:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9/11/01 cw- updated info</li> <li>9/3/03dnb - update to HDHS</li> <li>7/2004 rw/jh/dnb - updated to current methodologies</li> <li>9/22/2005dnb - removed inpatient language, added pertussis collection</li> <li>2/28/2007 dnb - add lab users' manual to distribution list</li> <li>8/13/2007 jh/lg - added info on Foley tips &amp; IUD's</li> <li>3/19/2008 lg – reformat</li> <li>5/17/2010 jh - updated to reflect send out labs, updated lab director's name</li> <li>7/13/2010 dnb – formatting updates, including adding chart header at top of each page; updated bone marrow and tissue specimens</li> <li>7/15/2010 dnb – added specific bone marrow information from MLK-MACC laboratory</li> <li>7/21/2010 jh/dnb – removed reference to Lukens trap for collection of Tracheostomy aspirates</li> <li>4/29/13 jh changed testing to Quest where appropriate, added Polymedco FIT kits for occult blood.</li> <li>3/28/17jh (changed approver to Dr.Yee)</li> </ul>
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