

MICROBIOLOGY GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS Specimen Collection, Transport, and Rejection Criteria

SPECIMEN COLLECTION AND HANDLING:

1. The clinical specimen must be material from the actual infectious site and must be collected with the minimum contamination from adjacent tissue, organ, or secretions.
2. Optimal times for specimen collection must be established for the best chance of recovery of causative microorganisms
3. A sufficient quantity of specimen must be obtained.
4. Whenever possible, obtain cultures prior to the administration of antibiotics.
5. Sterile containers should be used for collection of all specimens.
 - a. The containers should also have a secure lid to prevent leakage, contamination, or aerosol during transport or opening of specimen.
 - b. All specimens must be placed in a biohazard bag for transport.
 - c. It is important that the outside of the container is not grossly contaminated with the specimen.
 - d. All specimens for culture must include a source.
6. If a specimen is to be aliquoted, never pour aliquot back in the original container. Computer aliquot labels should be used through all phases of testing, to assure proper identification of specimen.
7. Process all CSF specimens without delay.

Specimen Transport guide

Source	Transport Container
Blood	a) Bacterial: Blood culture bottles aerobic and anaerobic (bacterial culture) b) Mycology: Isolator Tube c) Acid Fast: MB BacT/Alert Bottle
CSF	Sterile screw-cap tubes

Source	Transport Container
Gastrointestinal 1. Stool 2. Rectal 3. Gastric washing 4. Rectal biopsy	1. Stool a) Culture: Sterile screw-cap cup or Carey Blair transport. b) Ova and parasite Screen:10%formalin c) Ova and parasite comprehensive: Ecofix d) C.diff: Screw cap cup e) Rotavirus: Screw cap cup or culturette 2. Culturette 3. Sterile screw-cap or sputum trap cup 4. Sterile screw-cap tube or cup. a) If specimen is small, add a small amount of sterile 0.85%saline.
Eye 1. Conjunctival Scraping 2. Corneal scraping 3. Intraocular fluid 4. Eye	1. Send prepared smears and directly inoculated media. 2. Send prepared smears and directly inoculated media. 3. Vitreous fluid trap or capped syringe without needle with air expelled. 4. Culturette
Genital tract, female 1. Amniotic fluid 2. Tissue 3. Cervical 4. Vaginal	1. Sterile screw-cap tube 2. Sterile screw-cap cup 3. Cervical a) Culture: Culturette b) GC/CT DNA Aptima tube 4. a) Culture: Culturette b) GC/CT DNA Aptima tube
Genital tract, male 1. Anal swab 2. Urethral	1. Culturette 2. a) Bacterial: Culturette b) GC/CT DNA Aptima tube
Lower respiratory track 1. Lung biopsy 2. Sputum 3. Bronchial washing	1. Sterile screw-cap cup 2. Sterile screw-cap cup or sputum trap 3. Sterile screw-cap cup or sputum trap

Source	Transport Container
4. BAL	4. Sterile screw-cap cup or sputum trap on ice.
Upper respiratory track	
1. Throat	1. Culturette
2. Nasal	2. Culturette
3. Oral	3. Culturette
4. Nasopharyngeal	4. Nasopharyngeal a) Culture: NP Swab b) Viral: Viral transport media
5. Nasal washing	5. Screw-cap cup or syringe without needle.
Sterile body fluids (excluding CSF, Blood and urine)	Sterile screw-cap cup or blood culture bottles
Subcutaneous skin	Culturette
Site wound	Culturette
Deep wound or abscesses	Sterile screw-cap container or tube
Soft tissue aspirates	Capped syringe without needle
Tissue	Sterile screw-cap container or tube with saline
Bone	Sterile container, if specimen small add small amount of sterile saline to container.
Urine	Culture: Boric acid urine collection tube or sterile cup. GC/CT DNA- Aptima urine collection device

Specimen Rejection Criteria

1. Unlabeled or mislabeled specimen.
 - a. Non-recollectable specimens:
 - i. Labeling errors must be corrected by the department/location collecting the specimen.
 - ii. If the specimen label is corrected and testing is performed, an external specimen comment will be entered in the computer describing the discrepancy and the name of the person authorizing use of the specimen.
 - b. Recollectable Specimens:
 - i. If specimen is unacceptable, the appropriate hospital department, physician office, or Lab Assistant will be notified in a timely manner. The reason for rejection will be communicated and request recollection the rejected specimen.

2. Duplicate specimen:

- a. Most duplicate specimens received on the same date should not be processed, exceptions include blood cultures, CSF, tissues and sterile body fluids.
3. Leaky containers:
 - a. A specimen is unacceptable when the outside of the container is grossly contaminated with the specimen.
 - b. If the container is leaking, set up the specimen only if it is possible to process without contaminating the processor.
4. Contaminated specimen:
 - a. Do not process a specimen if it is contaminated with another type of specimen. For example, a urine should not contain stool, and vice versa.
5. Unacceptable specimens:
 - a. Do not accept saliva in place of sputum for culture as out lined in Respiratory Culture procedure.
 - b. Foley catheter tips are unacceptable for culture.
 - c. Twenty-four hour urines specimens are unacceptable for bacterial cultures
 - d. Specimens submitted in a collection devise that has not been used to validate the procedure.
 - e. Specimen types that have not been validated for the procedure.
 - f. Urine for CT/GC DNA must be in Aptima urine transport tube within five hours after collection of urine.
 - g. Gastric aspirates for acid fast culture must be processed with in 4 hours after collection unless sodium bicarbonate is added to the specimen.
 - h. Stool specimens for bacterial culture are not accepted from inpatients after the third hospital day, without prior consultation. Also no more than two specimens/per patient without prior consult.
 - i. Stool specimens for Ova and Parasites are not accepted from inpatients after the third hospital day, without prior consultation. Also no more that three specimens/per patient without prior consult.
 - j. Formed stool specimen for C. difficile testing is not acceptable.
 - k. CT/GC DNA collected with a wooden swab is not acceptable.
 - l. Tissue specimen for cultures submitted in formalin is not acceptable.

m. Wrong specimen type for requested test.

6. Delay in transport

a. When a suboptimal specimen is processed, a comment should be made on the patients report to inform the physician. Examples of these comments are:

- Specimen received in unsterile container.
- Microorganisms isolated may not reflect actual microbiota because of faulty collection and/or transportation.

Reference: Policy 5.M.157.S Rev. 7/20, JA.M.002.S Rev. 11/21

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