

**CENTEGRA CLINICAL LABORATORIES**

**McHenry/Woodstock, Illinois**

**EAR CULTURE**

**OTITIS EXTERNA** - Otitis externa, commonly referred to as "swimmer's ear" is an infection of the external auditory canal. It is frequently caused by *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and an assortment of other aerobic bacteria.

**SUPPLIES:**

Mini-Tip (Nasopharyngeal) Swab for Otitis Media

Culturette Swab or other suitable swab collection and transport system for Otitis Externa

**PROCEDURE:**

1. Otitis Media - When an exudate is present after the rupture of the eardrum, it is best collected on a thin, sterile swab inserted through an auditory speculum and placed in transport media. A Mini-tip culturette may be used.
2. Tympanocentesis: Because of the invasive nature of the collection process, these specimens are usually submitted primarily to diagnose middle ear infections only if previous therapy has failed.
  - a. Clean the external canal with mild detergent.
  - b. Using a syringe aspiration technique, the physician will obtain the fluid from the ear drum.
  - c. Send the specimen in a sterile container or in the capped syringe with the needle removed.
  - d. *Note:* Anaerobic cultures should be restricted to specimens collected by tympanocentesis.
3. Otitis Externa - Purulent material may be present, but its origin is in the external auditory canal. Material collected for culture should be by swab and should be transported in transport medium. Vigorous swabbing is required since surface swabbing may miss streptococcal cellulitis.
  - a. Insert sterile swab into ear canal until resistance is met.
  - b. Rotate swab and allow fluid to collect on swab.

**TRANSPORT:**

Transport promptly to the laboratory.