

# COLLECTION AND ACCEPTABILITY OF MICROBIOLOGY SPECIMENS

July 2014

The following chart is intended as a reference for the collection and acceptability of specimens. If you have any questions, contact the Microbiology Department at 663-3456.

SPECIMEN TYPE	COLLECTION				TRANSPORT	COMMENTS
	Guidelines	Collection Device	Preservative	Minimum Volume		
Abscess	Remove surface exudates by wiping with saline or alcohol. Sample the lesion's advancing edge.	Sterile container, capped syringe or swab transport system.	Aerobic (red) swab has liquid Stuart's media.	Touch the infected area only with swab to avoid contamination of normal skin flora.	Most organisms will survive for 24-48 hours, but fastidious organisms may only survive up to 24 hrs.	Tissue or fluid is <u>always superior</u> to a swab specimen.
Body Fluids	Disinfect skin with iodine. Obtain specimen. Always submit as much fluid as possible; <b><i>never</i></b> submit a swab dipped in the fluid.	Sterile container or body fluid specimen aseptically inserted to Port-A-Cul transport vial.	No preservative. Port-A-Cul transports have reducing medium for anaerobic organism transport.	At least 1 ml for bacterial culture. At least 3 mls for bacterial, fungal and TB culture.	Must be received in lab within 24 hours of collection, held at room temperature.	The specimen should be brought to the lab as soon as possible, as there is no preservative.
DNA Probe: Chlamydia and GC	Wipe away any secretions or mucous with white swab and discard before sampling with a newly obtained blue swab.	Gen-Probe unisex swab collect kit for: endo-cx, vag, urethral. Use urine transport for first void urine. Misc sources use unisex swab for send out test.	Gen-Probe transport system. Keep at room temperature.	Insert <b>one</b> blue swab only in unisex transport medium. For urine transport, fill first void urine to window on side of tube.	Good for 60 days @ 2-30°C	If 2 swabs are placed in the transport medium, the sample is unacceptable for testing.
Genital Culture	Wipe away any secretions or mucous with a swab and discard before sampling with a newly obtained swab.	Aerobic (red) swab transport system.	Aerobic (red) swab has liquid Stuart's media.		Most organisms will survive for 24-48 hours, but fastidious organisms may only survive up to 24 hrs.	<i>N. gonorrhoeae</i> may not survive longer than 24 hours in transport.
Respiratory Cultures	Sputum- deep cough Throat – swab, directed towards infected area Eye, Ear – swab infected area	Aerobic (red) swab transport system. Minitip (green) swab for eye and ear cultures.	Aerobic (red) swab and Minitip (green) swab both have liquid Stuart's media.		Most organisms will survive for 24-48 hours, but fastidious organisms may only survive up to 24 hrs.	<i>N. gonorrhoeae</i> and <i>H. influenzae</i> may not survive longer than 24 hours in transport.
Stool	Pass specimen directly into a clean, dry container. Submit this specimen or transfer to a transport system.	Cary-Blair (orange) container for culture and ova & parasite screen. Formalin and PVA for full O&P.	Cary-Blair for culture, and ova and parasite screen, formalin and PVA for full ova and parasite test.	All containers must be filled until the liquid in the container is displaced to the line on the side.	All preserved specs are suitable for testing for up to 2 weeks in preservative. Must be rec'd w/in 3 days.	Unpreserved specimens are only good for 2 hours and will not be accepted after this time.
Urine	Area must be cleaned, and specimen collected midstream (unless catheterized). Foley catheter urines are unacceptable specimens.	Sterile, leak proof container.	Urine culture transport tube or refrigerate urine.	Urine culture tube must be minimally 1/2 filled. If unable to fill, send voided urine refrigerated.	Preserved urine is acceptable for up to 72 hours at room temp. Refrigerated urine up to 4 hours only.	Urine must either be refrigerated or placed in culture tube within 1 hour of collection, or it is unacceptable.
Wounds	Clean surface with alcohol or sterile saline. Sample the wound with a newly obtained swab.	Swab transport system.	Aerobic (red) swab has liquid Stuart's media. Anaerobic (blue) swab has Amies medium w/o charcoal.	Touch the infected area only with the swab to avoid contamination of normal skin flora.	Most organisms will survive for 24-48 hours, but fastidious organisms may only survive up to 24 hrs.	Wounds on outside of body are classified as "superficial" and inside body as "deep". <u>State source.</u>