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## Special Site Culture Collection

Specimens for cultures may be taken by the attending physician, nursing or laboratory personnel, or the patient, in some cases. Disposable culture collection tubes with swabs, sterile containers, and anaerobic transport tubes, are kept at all nurses stations, Surgery, and ER, and are available from the laboratory or the Purchasing Dept.

All specimens must be clearly labeled with the patient's name, date of birth or med record #, source of specimen, and date/time collected. All other pertinent information, such as source of specimen, test required, time of collection, physician's name, or any special orders, must be indicated on the request form.

Specimens must be taken aseptically, placed in sterile tubes or containers, kept free from contamination, and transported to the lab as soon as possible. It is important to ensure minimum delay in delivery of specimens to the lab and in processing of specimens in microbiology, especially for the following: CSF, wound cultures, anaerobic cultures and blood cultures. **A CULTURE IS ONLY AS GOOD AS THE SPECIMEN.** It is useless to culture an unsatisfactory specimen.

Special precautions need to be taken when obtaining or transporting specimens to the laboratory. Leak-proof containers with tight-fitting lids should be used for urines or fluids. The culturette swab should be submitted in its paper envelope. Specimens should be placed in biohazard bags. All syringes, ACT-II tubes, etc., should be handled with care and delivered to the laboratory without spills or leakage. The pneumatic tube systems should be used with discretion, and avoided as much as possible since there is concern with breakage and contamination in the system.

Special precautions must be taken to avoid sample cross-contamination that may not affect culture-based methods but may lead to false positive results when tested using molecular amplification methods.