NIPPLE DISCHARGE CYTOLOGY: COLLECTION, LABELING, AND PROCESSING OF SPECIMENS

I. **Principle:** Cytological evaluation is useful in detecting presence of cancer cells and determining the nature of the discharge.

II. **Ordering and Labeling:**

- Order the test in EPIC using test code LAB13 for Non-Gyn cytology.
- Enter the Specimen Source.
- Enter the source description in the box on the same line at the far right of the screen.
- When the Specimen Source is entered, another box opens below it for an additional specimen.
- Fill in for as many specimens as needed. Sign the order.
- Go to the Collection activity.
- Select collect all and document collection information by:
  - Click on the pencil to edit all collection information for all specimens.
  - OR click on the blue hyperlinks for each specimen to edit only that specimen’s collection information
- NOTE: additional sources can be added and source description can be modified during collection ONLY before clicking on the Print Labels button.
- Click on Print Labels.
- Label the fixative vial using the EPIC generated label. If microscopic slides are used, label the slides with the patient’s name and medical record number using a pencil. Label the Microscopic slide container with the footie label.

Proper patient history is essential to the successful interpretation of a cytological specimen and is required by regulations. Any evaluation and report is, at best, incomplete without correlating the cytological studies with a complete patient history. Improper labeling may cause the specimen to be returned for proper labeling, a delay while waiting for proper labeling or the specimen to be rejected and discarded.

III. **Collection:**

A. **Collection in vial:**

Materials:
- Plastic Spatula
- Vial of Preservcyt fixative

1. Wipe the surface of the nipple with gauze pad. Express the secretion by gently compressing the areola between the thumb and index finger.
2. Using a plastic spatula gently wipe the secretion.
3. Rinse the spatula in the Preservcyt vial immediately by swishing the spatula vigorously. Discard the collection device.
4. Tighten the cap so that the black torque line on the cap passes the torque line on the vial.
5. Label the vial with the EPIC generated label.
6. Place the vial and requisition in a specimen bag and transport to the laboratory.

B. Collection for conventional smear:

Materials:
- Microscopic slide
- Coplin jar of 95% alcohol

1. Label the frosted end of the microscope slide with the patient name and medical record number.
2. Wipe the surface of the nipple with a gauze pad. Express the secretion by gently compressing the areola between the thumb and index finger.
3. Smear the secretion by wiping the slide lengthwise across the secretion and immediately place the slide in the coplin jar. Place the EPIC generated label on the slide jar.

1. If only slides are received, print a label for the correct amount of slides and stain according the non gyn staining procedure.

VI. References: