

# Cytology – Receipt of Specimens and Acceptability Criteria

Any specimen received by non-Histology staff must be recorded in the appropriate logbook in Central Collection. To notify Histology personnel that a specimen has been received, take the requisition to the Histology department and place on the counter, then place the specimen in their refrigerator.

## Acceptable Specimens for Cytology

- Must be labeled with a stamped specimen label (or typed or handwritten specimen label or tape) including:
  - Patient's full name
  - Medical Record Number (MRN)
  - Physician's full name and/or 6 digit hospital identification
  - Time and date of collection
  - Specimen identity (type) or source
  - Initials of the person collecting the specimen
- If a glass slide is the specimen: last name (and preferably first initial) of the patient etched with diamond tip pencil or written with a solvent resistant pen or label (**NOTE: PENCIL IS NO LONGER ALLOWED. THIS IS A COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENT.**)
- The accompanying requisition should be a cytology form (or miscellaneous form) and must include:
  - Patient's full name
  - Patient's medical record number
  - Date of birth
  - Time and date of collection
  - Specimen type
  - Ordering physician's full name and/or 6 digit hospital identification
  - Relevant patient history
  - Initials of the person collecting the specimen
- Either the specimen label or the requisition **must** include the source or type of specimen (eg, cervix smear, gastric brushing, etc.).
- Non-Gynecologic requisitions **must** have the **time and date of receipt** stamped on them in Central Collection or Histology or hand recorded by laboratory personnel.

## Medico-Legal Specimens (eg, Specimens From Sexual Assault Victims, Alleged Rape, etc.)

- Chain of custody form will be initiated and filled out for each specimen in accordance with the "Specimen Handling-Chain of Custody Protocol" procedure.

## Criteria for Rejection of Specimens

**Note:** All rejections must be called to the physician and documented on the rejected specimen log. They must

also be documented by ordering the test, resulting the test with the appropriate rejection code and crediting the test.

- Gynecologic Smears
  - Smears that have not been fixed with 1 of the following:
    - Alcohol-based spray fixative
    - 95% ethanol
    - 5% acetic acid-95% ethanol fixative
    - 90% acetone
    - 80% isopropanol
    - 100% methanol
    - 95% denatured alcohol
    - Polyethylene glycol fixative (provided by the cytology laboratory).
  - Slide(s) broken into pieces too small to be adequately stained and mounted.
- Non-Gynecologic Smears:
  - Same criteria as above (unless air-dried smears are requested for Giemsa stains).
- Non-Gynecologic Specimens:
  - Specimen has **not** been refrigerated at 2° C to 6° C within an hour of collection (time of collection must be noted on specimen label).
- Sputa:
  - Quantity not sufficient for preparing adequate smears
- Gastric Washings:
  - Contamination with barium
- Specimens without identification, or specimen and requisition names don't match:
  - Nursing station or doctor's office is to be notified by phone and a new specimen is requested. In cases where it may be difficult or impossible to recollect the specimen (ie, cerebrospinal fluid (CSF), bronchial washings, etc.), the nursing unit or surgery personnel must be responsible for identifying and labeling the specimen.
  - Medical Laboratories of Eastern Iowa (ML) specimens will be repackaged and hand delivered to ML personnel. Specimen may be re-accepted with a written statement (on the requisition) of identification and who takes responsibility for the identification. This will be made part of the patient report.
  - If the specimen is to be recollected, the accompanying requisition is to be returned via the tube system to the responsible nursing station. The

requisition is not returned to the doctor's office in the case of outpatients.

—Upon receipt of the recollected specimen, discard the original specimen.

- Specimens improperly or inadequately labeled by Histology personnel:
  - Specimens that cannot be recollected must be properly identified by the person assisting at the time of collection.
- Unacceptable specimens may be processed at the discretion of a pathologist, especially if the specimen cannot be easily recollected (eg, CSF or gastric washings).