

COLLECTION PROCEDURES FOR PAP SMEARS, NON-GYN CYTOLOGY, AND BIOPSIES

Pap Smears as a Screening Test

PAP smears are a **screening test** for which there are several opportunities for a significant cervical lesion to be missed; this may occur either at the time of collection or during screening.

Extensive effort is made to never have a false negative test occur by utilizing random rescreens of negative smears. However, national figures indicate that up to 20 % of PAP smears may be reported falsely as negative due to the following:

1. Sampling issues.
2. Lack of appropriate cells.
3. The sample is absent.
4. Regarding conventional Paps: the sample may be too thick, too much mucus and blood, or the smear may contain drying artifacts.
5. The screening process.

The items listed above are reasons to promote the annual Pap smear.

PAP Smear Collections – Liquid based, HPV, HPV Reflex:

- a. Label specimen vial legibly with the patient's legal first and last name, along with the date of birth.
Specimen vial must be labeled in INK at the location provided on the specimen container.
- b. Obtain specimen in usual manner.
- c. Immediately place sample in the collection vial.
- d. Depending on the collection device used, both the spatula and brush **must** be broken off into the vial or the broom head removed/separated from the blue handle. Recap the vial and tighten to prevent leakage. Make sure to label vial with complete first and last name.
- e. Place collection vial and completed cytology requisition in plastic specimen bag and submit to the lab. Store at room temp.

NON-GYN Cytology Collections:

Fluids: (This includes breast cyst fluids and tzank smears.)

- a. **Label slide with pencil, DO NOT USE INK, patient first and last name.**
- b. All specimens should be sent on either a glass slide or in the container the specimen was collected in (syringe/sterile container).
- c. Specimens sent on slides should be sprayed with fixative immediately after collection. All other specimens should be refrigerated and sent to the lab as soon as possible. **If specimen is collected in a syringe, remember to remove the needle and use a syringe cap to seal the specimen.**
- d. Fill out requisition with all of the pertinent information. State the type of specimen, where it was collected and what testing is to be done.

Urine Specimens for Cytology:

- a. Collect voided or catheterized urine in the same container used for routine urinalysis (submit different specimens for each test). **DO NOT USE THE FIRST MORNING VOIDED SPECIMEN.** Refrigerate until sent to lab.
- b. Urine from infants may be sent in U-bags placed inside a closed urine container.
- c. Label specimen **legibly**. Request form should be completed with all the patient information and what testing is to be done.
- d. Send the specimen to the laboratory as soon as possible.

Sputum Specimens for Cytology:

- a. The container used for the sputum should have a secure closure and should not be filled more than half way.
- b. The most acceptable sputum specimen for exfoliated cells is the specimen collected when the patient first awakens in the morning. Do not wait until the patient has eaten breakfast, for this will contaminate the specimen with food particles.
- c. The patient may drink some water or rinse the mouth to clear away excess oral epidermal cells; however, this is not absolutely necessary.
- d. The patient should then take several deep breaths, exhaling the last with an expulsive cough into the specimen container.
- e. **Label specimen legibly with patient's name and time / date of collection.**
- f. Send the specimen to the lab as soon as possible. Refrigerate until delivered to lab.
- g. Cytologic procedures may be ordered on the same specimen collected for microbiology if the quantity of specimen is adequate, (not less than 5 mls). If recommended volume is not forwarded to the laboratory on a multi-request specimen, tests must be prioritized on requisitions.

BIOPSIES:

- a. **Biopsies only:** Specimens should be placed in a formalin container. Make sure container is **closed securely**. Store at room temperature.
Label specimen vial legibly with the patient's legal first and last name, along with the date of birth.
Specimen vial must be labeled in INK at the location provided on the specimen container.
Complete requisition with patient information, specimen type, and time/date of collection.
- b. **Culture and biopsy:** place specimen in a clean, sterile container that has a small amount of sterile saline added to prevent drying. Culture will be set up first and specimen then processed for biopsy. **No formalin** is added when a culture is ordered as the formalin will kill bacteria. Make sure container is sealed securely. Deliver to lab ASAP.

Kidney Stone(s):

- a. The kidney stone(s) should be collected in a clean, empty container. Label the container with the complete first name, last name and date of birth. Store at room temperature until delivered to lab.
- b. Complete a requisition with all patient information, stone location (i.e. kidney vs. renal) and what testing is to be done.