

Virology General Considerations

SPECIMEN COLLECTION AND TRANSPORT:

➤ Collection of **nasopharyngeal specimens**

1. Assemble the following materials(*provided in collection packet available from Virology)
 - a. viral transport media*
 - a. ii. Flocked swab
 - b. iii. cup of ice
 - c. vi. labels for specimen
2. Place flocked swab through the nose to the back of the nasopharynx. Retain in place one minute (timed). Remove and place in the same vial of viral transport media. This procedure should not be painful if properly performed. If additional information is needed, please call Virology.
3. **Close tube of viral transport media securely.**
4. Label the specimen with the computer generated labels, date, time, collected by.
5. Place in cup of ice and place cup of ice in transport bag. Close bag and transport to Virology.
6. Specimens should not lie around on desks, charts or in the patient's room prior to transport. The amount of virus you start with is all there will ever be in that tube – it does not "grow". Many viruses are labile at room temperature and will rapidly "die" when transport is delayed.

➤ Collection of **Lesion Specimens** for varicella zoster (herpes zoster) or herpes simplex virus:

1. Assemble the following materials:
 - a. viral transport media
 - b. cotton tipped applicators with plastic shaft (stick) or flocked swab
 - c. cup of ice
 - d. labels for specimen
2. Obtain swab of the lesion. The cells that contain virus are at the base of the lesion. If the lesion is vesicular or blister-like, you must open the lesion prior to swabbing. Do not contaminate the sample with blood if possible. Sampling more than one lesion increases the yield of the culture. Place swab(s) in viral transport media and break off shaft of swab (stick). Be sure that the cap is secure to avoid specimen leaks.
3. Label the specimen with the computer generated labels, date, time, collected by and place in cup of ice. Place cup in transport bag and seal.
4. Transport to Laboratory. Varicella is especially labile and immediate transport to laboratory with prompt processing is essential.

➤ **Cerebrospinal fluid (CSF)** should be collected in a sterile tube. This tube should be labeled and placed on ice for immediate transport. **DO NOT PUT CSF IN VIRAL TRANSPORT MEDIA.**

Notes:

- Tubes of transport media should be securely closed in order to avert any leakage. , . Leaking specimens are not processed.
- Appropriate means should be provided for labeling the specimen. Computer generated labels should be used whenever possible.

- Sufficient information, including patient's name, age, gender, hospital number, date and time of collection, physician's name, patient's immunological status, source of specimen, special pathogens for consideration, and relevant clinical diagnosis must be provided on requisition for non-CAMC specimens. For CAMC, relevant clinical information must be entered under the diagnosis comment at order entry.
- Standard Precautions guidelines must be followed when collecting and handling patient specimens.

CRITERIA FOR REJECTION OF VIROLOGY SPECIMENS:

1. Container NOT identified or labeled properly
2. Specimen grossly contaminated, e.g., leaking container, damaged or improper container.
3. Specimen received in culturette, anaerobic transport device or other transport media.
4. Excessive delay between specimen collection and arrival in the lab without proper transport media
5. Specimens for Chlamydia trachomatis amplified DNA probe Must be collected using the NAT collection kit, or be the first voided 15-20 ml of urine.
6. For information or questions about specimen selection and or collection, please contact the Virology Laboratory 388-4308
7. Plasma can be used for HIV and hepatitis B serology only and is not acceptable for any other serology.
8. Blood for heparin PF4 serology cannot be collected other than by venipuncture.
9. Hemolyzed blood cannot be used for serology.

Positives by isolation, antigen or nucleic acid detection for the following organisms are reported to the County or State Health Department as appropriate:

1. Chlamydia trachomatis
2. Mumps
3. Measles
4. Rubella
5. Polio
6. Arboviruses
7. Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever
8. Borrelia burgdorferi positive with confirmation testing
9. Novel Influenza A
10. HIV
11. Hepatitis (HCV).
12. Hepatitis B Surface Antigen
13. Hepatitis B Core Antibody- IgM
14. Hepatitis A- IgM Antibody

- **For specimens not covered above, please contact the Virology Laboratory for additional information. 388-4308**