SPUTUM CYTOLOGY: COLLECTION, LABELING, AND PROCESSING OF SPECIMENS

I. Principle:
For processing sputum specimens submitted for cytological evaluation to determine the presence or absence of malignant tumor cells, premalignant, or benign conditions and infectious organisms using a pap stain. For GMS stained specimens, refer to specimens for identification of pneumocystis carinii procedure. For best diagnostic results, submit one sputum specimen for each of three consecutive days.

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 specimen container using the EPIC generated label.

III. Collection:
1. Have the patient rinse his/her mouth before coughing, to avoid oral contamination.
2. The specimen should come from the lungs and bronchi. Early morning coughs are acceptable. It is important to obtain a post-bronchoscopy specimen.
3. The patient should exhale forcibly then cough before inhaling. The raised material is sputum.
4. The raised material should be expectorated into a sputum specimen jar containing Cytolyt solution available from cytology, ext: 3716
5. The jar should be tightly capped and shaken to mix the specimen and fixative.
6. If additional tests are requested, submit a separate specimen to the laboratory following the appropriate test guidelines.
7. Label the sputum container using the EPIC generated label.

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