BRONCHIAL WASHINGS: COLLECTION, LABELING, AND PROCESSING OF SPECIMENS

I. Principle:
For processing bronchial washings submitted for cytological evaluation to determine the presence or absence of malignant tumor cells, premalignant, or benign conditions including differential cell counts for hypersensitivity pneumonitis (farmer’s lung) and infectious organisms using a pap stain. For GMS stained specimens, refer to specimens for identification of pneumocystis carinii procedure.

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 clean wash container using the EPIC generated 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:
1. Obtain the specimen following recommended procedures by instilling and retrieving saline into the suspected area.
2. Retrieve the specimen into a clean wash container. 10 mls’ is desired for optimum cytological evaluation.
3. If microbial studies are requested, submit the specimen to the microbiology laboratory. Clearly indicate cytological studies are requested.
4. Do not add fixative (Cytolyt) to the container unless a considerable delay is expected and no cultures are ordered. Refrigeration is recommended if a delay is expected.