



## MALARIA SMEARS

The diagnosis of malaria can be aided by finding and identifying the specific malaria parasite in the blood. Thick smears stained with Geimsa Stain aid in the detection of the parasites, whereas thin smears stained with Wright's Stain are required for morphological examination. At least 3 smears should be prepared of **both** types of slide for each patient.

1. Preferred: Slides may be made from **unanticoagulated** blood from a fingerstick or venipuncture. If using a syringe, make the smears from the end of the needle (no anticoagulant).
2. Prepare at least 3 thin blood smears as you would the traditional blood smear for differential.
3. Make at least 3 thick smears by placing a drop of blood on a slide, spread out to the size of a dime, and at a thickness through which newsprint can be read.
4. Allow thick slides to air-dry in a dust-free area for 8-12 hours or overnight.
5. **Note:** EDTA anticoagulated blood is also acceptable to use if slides are made **within** 2 hours of collection.

Note: Obtain information from the patient about travel outside of the United States, where and when. Also inquire if the patient is taking medication. The usual malaria incubation time is 1-3 weeks, although several strains have much longer incubation periods. For best results, specimens should be collected during the 10-12 hours after a chill.