



Test	Guidelines for Collection	Collection System	Optimal Transport	Limitations	Comments
Beta Strep Screen, Group A	Depress tongue with tongue depressor. Sample the posterior pharynx and tonsils, avoiding contact with the oral cavity.	Culture Swab	Room temp within 1 day	Test for the presence of Beta Hemolytic Strep.	Other Pathogens are covered in a <i>Throat Culture</i>
Clostridium Difficile Molecular	Collect fresh stool, having the patient pass stool directly into a wide-mouthed container.	Sterile, leak proof, wide-mouth container	Within 1 day	Only liquid stools will be tested	Previously tested patients will not be retested within 7 days of the molecular result.
Culture, Acid Fast and Smear	Collect appropriate specimen type. May include tracheal aspirates, bronchial washings, body fluids, stool, CSF, and tissue Sputum should be 3 complete, consecutive, first morning specimen of at least 5ml. Urine should be 3 complete, consecutive, first morning specimen	Sterile, leak proof container	Within 1 day. If delay is expected, refrigerate.	Specimens on swabs yield sub-optimal results, and will only be processed if aspirated material or tissue is not available	Results: Smear reports are available within 24 hours. Final culture reports available at 8 weeks or as completed. Physicians and nursing unit will be notified of <i>ALL</i> positive results immediately.
Culture, Acid Fast Blood	Collect 10ml of blood in a Sodium Heparin tube.	Sodium Heparin Tube	Room temp Within 48 hours	Specimen sent to Reference Laboratory for testing.	Results: 8 weeks or as completed.
Culture, Aerobic / Anaerobic Swabs and Gram	Collect 2 swabs. One Culture Swab One Anaerobic Specimen Collector swab (gray top, glass)	Culture Swab and Anaerobic Specimen Collector Swab (gray top, glass)	Room temp Within 1 day	Anaerobic cultures will not be done on areas normally colonized with anaerobes, such as vagina or mouth.	Specimens collected on swabs are least desirable. Collect fluids, aspirates, or tissues when possible.



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Culture, Blood	Collect specimen according to Nursing/Phlebotomy Guidelines. Clearly indicate date, time, and site of collection on the vial.	2 Bactec Vials: 1 Aerobic (blue cap) 8-10 ml, and 1 Anaerobic (purple cap) 8-10 ml Children: 1 Pediatric (pink top) vial at least 0.5 ml, 1-3 ml optimum	Immediate Room Temp Up to 1 day	No more than 2 cultures may be drawn per day at no less than 1 hour intervals. <i>However, 2 cultures may be drawn simultaneously from separate sites.</i>	All cultures are screened for bacteria. Special requests for yeast or fungi should be indicated in comment or phoned to the micro lab. Blood cultures are held for 5 days.
Culture, Bone	Aseptically collect sample of bone with minimum attached tissue. Place in sterile container. Clearly indicate site.	Sterile, leak proof container	Immediate	Specimens in their entirety will <i>NOT</i> be accepted for culture. (Ex: an entire toe, skin, tissue and bone together.)	Bones are not appropriate for direct smear or Gram stain.
Culture, Bone Marrow	Collect bone marrow in a plain red top tube.	Red-top, No additive tube.	Immediate		
Culture, Bronchial and Gram Stain	Collect specimen during a bronchoscopy procedure in a sterile Lukens tube.	Sterile Lukens tube	Immediate	Includes BAL, bronchial washings, and brushes	Bronchial test request form must accompany specimen.
Culture, Cath Tip	Cut off ½" – 1" tip of catheter using sterile technique. Place in sterile container	Sterile container	Immediate	Foley catheter tips are inappropriate for testing. Submit urine instead.	
Culture, CSF and Gram Stain	Collect 1ml or more of CSF in a sterile plastic tube.	Sterile plastic tube. Sterile Spinal Tap tray available from the sterile processing department	Immediate		All CSF must be transported directly to the Hematology department for Responsibility tracking.



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Culture, Ear and Gram Stain	Collect specimen on a culture swab. Indicate right/left, inner/outer.	Culture swab	Room temp Within 1 day		One specimen is acceptable for bacterial and fungal culture.
Culture, E.coli 0157	See Enteric Pathogens Panel (NAAT)				
Culture, Eye and Gram Stain	Collect on a mini-tip culture swab. Clearly label site.	Mini-tip culture swab	Room temp Within 1 day		Eye fluids such as vitreous or aqueous fluid should be ordered as a fluid culture. Scleral rings should be ordered as a Scleral Ring Culture.
Culture, Fluid-Aerobic/Anaerobic and Gram Stain	Collect fluid in a sterile, plain, <i>NO - ADDITIVE tube</i> . Clearly indicate fluid type.	Sterile, plain, <i>NO-ADDITIVE tube</i> .	Immediate	Swabs should <i>NOT</i> be used in the collection of a fluid.	All fluids must be transported directly to the Hematology department for Responsibility tracking.
Culture, Fungus Skin, Hair, Nails	Various specimen types include: Hair clippings, nail clippings / scrapings, skin scrapings. Prior to collection of nail specimens, the surface of the nail; should be thoroughly cleaned with 70% alcohol.	A DRY sterile container.	Room temp As soon as possible		Testing includes a direct exam
Culture, Fungus Screen	Collect appropriate specimen and inoculate Fungus Media	Fungus Media, Derma Tube (orange media)	Room temp As soon as possible		
Culture, Fungus Other	For specimens other than skin, hair, or nails, such as fluids, respiratory specimens, tissues.	Sterile container	As soon as possible	Specimens received on swabs yield sub-optimal results and will only be processed if aspirated material or tissue is not available.	Testing includes a direct exam. The direct exam for CSF is an India Ink Prep



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Culture, Genital and Gram Stain	Collect appropriate specimen. Indicate source; cervical, vaginal, penile, urethra, etc.	Male: mini-tip culture swab Female: culture swab	Room temp Within 1 day		
Culture, Legionella	Collect appropriate specimen in sterile container. Respiratory sources may include; Sputum, Trach, Bronchial Washings.	Sterile container or Lukens's Tube	As soon as possible		
Culture, Scleral Ring	Collect scleral ring and holding media	Sterile cup. Capped syringe, WITHOUT needle.	Immediate		
Culture, Sinus Irrigation and Gram Stain	Collect sinus aspirate or irrigation in sterile container	Sterile cup	As soon as possible		
Culture, Sputum and Gram Stain	Patient should be instructed to remove dentures, rinse mouth, and gargle with water. The patient should then be instructed to cough deeply and expectorate sputum directly into sterile container.	Sterile, leak-proof container	Room temp, within 2 hours. Refrigerated, within 1 day.	Specimen quality will be evaluated by gram stain. If it contains oropharyngeal contamination the culture will be canceled and physician/unit notified.	Swabs of sputum will not be processed with the exception of Cystic Fibrosis patients
Culture, Stool and Shiga Toxins I/II	See Enteric Pathogens Panel (NAAT)				
Culture, Throat	Depress tongue with tongue depressor. Sample the posterior pharynx and tonsils, avoiding contact with oral cavity.	Culture Swab	Room temp Within 1 day		
Culture, Tissue Aerobic/Anaerobic and Gram Stain	Collect surgical or biopsy material in a sterile container. Clearly indicate site/source	Sterile cup May add sterile saline to prevent specimen from drying out.	Immediate	Specimens, in their entirety, will NOT be accepted for culture (Ex: an entire toe, skin tissue and bone together.)	



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Culture, Trach/ET and Gram Stain	Collect secretions in a sterile Lukens's Tube.	Sterile Lukens's Tube	Room temp, within 2 hours. Refrigerated, within 1 day.	Swabs of Trach sites are inappropriate for Trach Culture. Order as Culture, Wound and indicate source.	
Culture, Urine Clean Void	Collect specimen according to Nursing procedures. Provide patient with clear instructions about cleansing procedures.	Sterile leak-proof container. BD Urine collection device (gray top tube)	Room temp, within 2 hours. BD tube, within 2 days.		
Culture, Urine Diagnostic Cath	Collect specimen according to Nursing procedures.	Sterile leak-proof container. BD Urine collection device (gray top tube)	Room temp, within 2 hours. BD tube, within 2 days.		
Culture, Urine Foley Cath	Collect specimen according to Nursing procedures	Sterile leak-proof container. BD Urine collection device (gray top tube)	Room temp, within 2 hours BD tube, within 2 days.		
Culture, Urine Suprapubic Cath	Collect specimen according to Nursing procedures	Sterile leak-proof container. BD Urine collection device (gray top tube)	Room temp, within 2 hours. BD tube, within 2 days.		
Culture, Vaginal Strep, Group B	Collect both vaginal and rectal sources.	Culture Swab	Within 2 days		
Culture, Wound and Gram Stain	Collect appropriate source. Label with specific source. Specify deep or superficial.	Culture Swab	Within 1 day		



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Culture, Yeast and Smear	Collect appropriate specimen. Various specimen types include; throat, esophageal brush, vaginal, rectal or stool.	Culture Swab Sterile cup	Within 2 days		Direct exam not performed on urine or stool.
Culture, Yersinia	See Enteric Pathogens Panel (NAAT)				
Enteric Pathogens Panel (NAAT)	Collect liquid or soft stool. Specimen can be placed in Cary Blair medium if available.	Sterile leak-proof container. Cary Blair medium.	Room temp, within 1 hour. Refrigerated, within 1 day. Preserved, within 2 days	Note: Preserved specimens are unacceptable for Toxigenic Clostridium Difficile testing by PCR.	Includes testing for Campylobacter Group, Salmonella Species, Shigella Species, Vibrio Group, Hemorrhagic E coli, Yersinia enterocolitica, Norovirus GI/GII and Rotavirus A.
Fecal Leukocytes	Collect fresh stool, having patient pass stool directly into wide-mouthed container.	Sterile leak-proof container	Room temp, within 1 hour. Refrigerated, within 1 day.		
GC Screen	Collect appropriate specimen. Specimens may include vaginal, rectal, throat. May be inoculated directly to media (JEMBEC) available from Microbiology department.	Culture Swab or inoculated JEMBEC media	Swab – as soon as possible JEMBEC media – as soon as possible	Timely transport and incubation are critical for the recovery of this organism.	
GC / Chlamydia by NAAT	Collect appropriate specimen. Sources may include; endocervical, vaginal and urethral	Thin Prep Vial APTIMA Unisex or Vaginal Collection Kit	Room temp Within 7 days.	Repeat testing is not indicated within 3 months of treatment.	Test of cure is not indicated per CDC recommendations.
GC / Chlamydia by NAAT (Urine)	Collect urine in sterile cup	Sterile leak-proof container	Room temp, within 2 hours. Refrigerated, within 1 day.	Repeat testing is not indicated within 3 months of treatment.	Test of cure is not indicated per CDC recommendations.



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Giardia Antigen Test	Collect fresh stool, having patient pass stool directly into wide-mouthed container. Transport media is available for outpatient collections	Sterile leak-proof container OR Para-Pak Pink/Gray Top transport media	Room temp, within 1 hour. Refrigerated, within 1 day. Preserved, within 2 days.		
Gram Stain Only	Collect appropriate specimen.	Culture Swab	Within 1 day.		
HPV by NAAT	Collect appropriate specimen.	Thin-Prep Vial	Room temp Within 7 days		May request HPV Genotyping (16, 18/45) on positive specimens
India Ink Prep	Collect 1 ml or more of CSF in a sterile plastic tube.	Sterile plastic tube Sterile Spinal Tap tray available from the sterile processing department.	Immediate		India Ink Prep is also included as part of the fungal culture for CSF specimens.
Influenza A/B and RSV by PCR (Rapid)	Collect specimen according to Nursing Procedures. Place swab in Universal Transport Media	Nasopharyngeal mini-tip swab in Universal Transport Media (UTM)	As soon as possible, but within 3 days in UTM		All specimens are tested for Influenza A, Influenza B, and Respiratory Syncytial Virus.
KOH Prep	Collect appropriate specimen in a sterile cup. Appropriate specimens include skin, hair and nails.	A DRY sterile container.	Room temp. As soon as possible.		This is a direct exam for yeast and fungus.

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Meningitis Encephalitis Panel (NAAT)	Collect at least 200 microliters of CSF from a lumbar puncture.	Sterile leak-proof container	As soon as possible, but room temp for up to 24 hours. Refrigerated, up to 7 days.	CSF obtained via lumbar puncture is the only appropriate specimen for this assay.	Tests for: Escherichia coli K1, Haemophilus influenza, Listeria monocytogenes, Neisseria meningitidis, Strep agalactiae, Strep pneumoniae, Cytomegalovirus, Enterovirus, Herpes simplex virus 1, 2 and 6, Human parechovirus, Varicella zoster virus, Cryptococcus neoformans/gattii
Legionella Urinary Antigen	Collect 1ml or more of urine in a sterile container.	Sterile leak-proof container	Room temp, within 2 hours. Refrigerated, within 1 day.		
MRSA Screen	Collect specimen according to Nursing procedures. Source: Nares	Culture Swab	Room temp Within 1 day	Cultures for MRSA only Only Nares will be cultured.	MRSA= Methicillin Resistant Staph Aureus
Pinworm Examination	Collect a pinworm paddle preparation or perianal region after the patient has been resting at least two hours or in early morning before patient has bathed or defecated	<i>Swube</i> : a pinworm paddle in a sterile plastic tube. Available from the Microbiology department.	Within 1 day	Do NOT collect on "scotch tape". Tape preps will NOT be processed.	Full collection procedures available with <i>Swube</i> collection device.
Rapid Group A Strep Antigen (Throat)	Depress tongue with tongue depressor. Sample the posterior pharynx and tonsils, avoiding contact with oral cavity.	Double-head culturette (available from Microbiology department)	As soon as possible	If rapid antigen result is negative, a culture plate will be reflexed automatically.	



Department of Laboratory Medicine - Microbiology

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Scabies	Collect skin scrapings of lesion according to nursing procedures. Send glass slide with glycerol and coverslip to lab in a cup.	Glass slide with glycerol and coverslip.	Within 1 day		Itch mites, <i>Sarcoptes scabiei</i> Supplies as well as a collection procedure are available upon request from the Microbiology department.
Staph Screen	Collect specimen according to Nursing procedures. Sources may include nares, axilla, and groin. Primary source: Nares	Culture Swab	Room temp Within 1 day	Cultures for Staph aureus- Both sensitive and resistant strains.	
Streptococcus pneumoniae Urinary Antigen	Collect 1 ml or more of urine in a sterile cup.	Sterile leak-proof container.	Room temp, within 2 hours. Refrigerated, within 1 day.		
Trichomonas by NAAT	Collect appropriate specimen. Sources may include; endocervical, vaginal	ThinPrep Vial APTIMA Unisex or Vaginal Collection Kit.	Room temp Within 7 days		Not performed on urine or male urethral swabs. These specimens will be sent to a reference laboratory for testing.
VRE Screen	Collect specimen according to Nursing procedures.	Culture Swab	Within 1 day	Source: Peri-rectal swab only	



Molecular Testing Available by specimen type:

Specimen Type	Available Testing	Guidelines for Collection	Optimal Transport	Limitations	Comments
Non Vesicular Lesion	Herpes Molecular Tests for HSV I, HSV II, and VZV	Collect cells from base of lesion using a swab pre-moistened with sterile saline. Place swab into UTM.	Room temp, within 1 day. Refrigerated, within 3 days		Tests for HSV I, HSV II, and VZV
Vesicle Aspirate	Herpes Molecular Tests for HSV I, HSV II, and VZV	Wipe area with sterile saline. Aspirate fluid from vesicle with a 26 or 27 gauge needle attached to a tuberculin syringe. Dispense syringe into UTM.	Room temp, within 1 day. Refrigerated, within 3 days		Tests for HSV I, HSV II, and VZV
Nasopharyngeal Swab	Respiratory Viral Pathogens by NAAT	Insert flexible fine-shafted swab through nostril into nasopharynx and rotate swab gently a few times. Place swab into UTM.	Room temp, within 1 day. Refrigerated, within 3 days		Tests for Influenza A, subtype H1, subtype H3, Influenza B, Parainfluenza 1,2,3,4 Adenovirus, RSV A, RSV B, Human Metapneumovirus, Rhinovirus, Bordetella pertussis, Bordetella parapertussis/brochiseptica and Bordetella holmseii. Partial panel testing available for specimens previously tested for Influenza A, Influenza B, and RSV
Skin	Culture, Viral Skin	Place specimen in a sterile container	ASAP	Tests for HSV, VZV	Other viruses tested upon request



Specimen Type	Available Testing	Guidelines for Collection	Optimal Transport	Limitations	Comments
Genital specimen for Herpes Simplex	Herpes Molecular Tests for HSV I, HSV II and VZV	<p>Cervical: remove endocervical mucus with swab and discard swab. Insert fresh swab at least 1 cm into cervical canal; rotate swab against surface for at least 10 seconds.</p> <p>Vaginal: Insert swab into vaginal canal and rotate.</p> <p>Urethral: Insert swab 2-4 cm into urethra and gently rotate 2 to 3 times.</p> <p>Other genital sources: Swab area, or if lesions are visible, break vesicle and collect fluid and cells from the base of the lesion. Place swabs in UTM.</p>	Room temp, within 1 day. Refrigerated, within 3 days.	NOTE: Prenatal screening specimens are not acceptable for this assay.	Tests for HSV I, HSV II, and VZV

Abbreviations:

HSV I = Herpes Simplex Virus Type I
 HSV II = Herpes Simplex Virus Type II
 VZV = Varicella Zoster Virus

NAAT= Nucleic Acid Amplification Test/PCR