

Specimen Types

1. Whenever possible, an aspiration is the specimen of choice for anaerobic cultures.
2. The use of swabs is discouraged for obtaining specimens for anaerobic cultures because the amount of material obtained is generally inadequate, and there are no completely effective swab systems that assure anaerobiasis.
3. For anaerobic blood cultures see: Blood Cultures - Routine Bacterial.
4. Determine if the source is acceptable for anaerobic culturing. Refer to the chart that follows:

Recommended Sources for Anaerobic Culturing

Source of Specimen	Will Be Cultured	Will Not Be Cultured
Body fluid	Blood, amniotic fluid, ascitic fluid, pleural fluid, spinal fluid, body fluids	
Exudate	Aspirated pus from abscesses or deep wound	Pus from superficial wounds Decubitus ulcers
Genital specimens	Placenta, culdocentesis, septic AB, endometrial cavity	Cervical, vaginal
Surgical specimens	Appendix, gallbladder, etc.	
Respiratory	Transtracheal aspirate	Nose and throat, expectorated sputum, bronchoscopic specimen
GI		Stool
GU	Suprapubic tap	Urine-voided or catheterized

Unacceptable Specimens

- Specimen collected from an unacceptable site as listed above (sites with normal anaerobic flora)
- Non-anaerobic transport system used
- Excessive delay in transport to Lab

Materials Required

1. Anaerobic swab transport system (BBL Port-A-Cul Tube)- obtain from [North Memorial Health Laboratory](#)
 - a) Check out-date on anaerobic transport packaging before using; if outdated, return to Lab and obtain fresh transporters.
 - b) If before inoculation the transporter is a pink, blue or lavender color, do not use. The appearance of any of these colors indicates air exposure.
2. Sterile syringe and needle
3. Alcohol preps
4. Iodine tincture applicators

Specimen Collection

Aspirations - BBL Port-A-Cul Tube

1. Use a 70% isopropyl alcohol swab followed by a Sepps 2% iodine disposable swab to cleanse the puncture site as outlined below:
 - a) With an alcohol swab, cleanse the puncture site.
 - b) Wipe the rubbery cap of the anaerobic transport tube with alcohol prep.
 - c) With a Sepps swab, vigorously rub in a circular motion starting at the puncture site and extending out to cover a 3-inch circle for about 20-30 seconds duration. Allow iodine prep to dry for about **one minute**.
 - d) **Do Not Palpate Area After Cleaning.** Gloves must be worn while aspirating specimen.
2. Using a sterile syringe, aspirate specimen directly into syringe.
3. Any air trapped in the syringe should be carefully expelled into an alcohol-saturated sponge.
4. Expel specimen from syringe into anaerobic tube.
5. Label specimen and request, include specific source. If this is from a surgical incision that has become infected include that information as part of the source.

Swabs - BBL Port-A-Cul Tube

1. Two swabs should be obtained- Use the swabs provided in the anaerobic transport package.
2. Sample the wound site with both swabs, taking care to avoid skin and surface contaminants.
3. Remove cap on transport tube and quickly place both swabs into the medium. It is important that the swabs be inserted into the tube to within approximately 5 mm from the bottom of the medium. Quickly replace and tighten

- cap. Expose the medium to the air as little as possible.
4. Label specimen and request, include specific source. If this is from a surgical incision that has become infected include that information as part of the source.

Specimen Transport and Ordering

1. Send specimen to Laboratory immediately after collection. For off-site collection, transport ASAP.
2. Order anaerobic culture. This test includes:
 - a. Aerobic culture (same as a routine culture)
 - b. Gram stain
 - c. Anaerobic culture