

Specimen Types:

- › Blood - order Blood culture, Fungus (**See: Blood Cultures** in sidebar content).
- › Hair - order Culture, Fungus Hair.
- › Nails - order Culture, Fungus Nail (KOH not routinely performed).
- › Skin - order Culture, Fungus Skin.
- › Respiratory – order Culture, Fungus Respiratory
- › Other - order Culture, Fungus Other.

Fungal microscopic examination (KOH prep) is a routine component of Fungus Cultures except for blood and nails.

Specimen Collection:

Hair, nails, and skin:

Five to twenty pieces of skin, hair or nail are desired. Specimens submitted on swabs are less satisfactory but are acceptable, particularly from babies and from moist, mucutaneous areas. Fluid from within a vesicle is not acceptable for isolation of dermatophytes, rather skin from the surface of a vesicle should be submitted.

- › **Hair** - Examine with a wood's light if available. If wood's light is positive (green fluorescence), take fluorescing hairs. If wood's light is negative, take dull gray hairs. Submit in sterile container.
- › **Nail** - Scrape involved areas deeply or clip generous amounts and submit in a small sterile container. Please clip nails into 5-20 smaller pieces for easier culturing.
- › **Skin** - Cleanse area with alcohol. Submit skin scrapings from edge of active lesion, or tops of vesicles. Remove with a sharp blade, or material dug out from nail fold with a toothpick or a probe. Submit in sterile container. If specimen is scant, then also place blade used to scrape skin into the sterile container. Sterile gloves must be worn.

Respiratory:

- › Specimens such as Bronchial washes and BALs should generally be collected by Respiratory Therapy or a physician only.

Other:

- › **Tissue** - Place specimen into sterile screw-cap container.
- › **Ear Canal, Nasopharynx, Throat *, Vaginal *, and Cervix *** - Use CultureSwab (red cap). Swabs are generally not encouraged for fungus cultures. However, specimens from certain body sites, such as the ear canal, nasopharynx, throat, vagina and cervix, are not readily collected by other means. Swabs for collection of material from open wounds or draining lesions are frequently contaminated with environmental microorganisms.
- › **Urine* and Stool*** - Place specimen into a sterile screw-cap container.

Specimen Collection:

- › Label all specimens and transport to the laboratory.
- › Keep hair, nail, and skin specimens at room temperature.
- › Refrigerate tissue and swab specimens.

***Note:** A yeast culture is generally sufficient for throat, vaginal, cervical, urine and stool specimens. A fungus culture is NOT required.