

Microbiology Specimen Guidelines

CULTURE TYPE	ORDER CODE	COLLECTION CONTAINER	TRANSPORT	LIMITS	TAT
Anaerobic culture	Included in LAB898, LAB503, LAB269	Blue top swab or Eswab	Room temp.		7 days
Actinomyces	IUD: LAB5682 (<i>Device culture</i>)	IUD, other sources (Swab or sterile container).	<24 hrs refrigerated	Include “Look for actinomyces” in the comments	14 days
	Other sources: LAB2326 (<i>Specific organism screen</i>) .				
Specific Organism Screen (<i>Bacterial ID</i>)	LAB2326	Isolated Organism on culture medium	<24 hrs room temp		48 hours
Blood Culture – 1 set (aerobic/anaerobic bottle or 1 Pedi bottle). <i>Includes gram stain on positive bottles.</i>	LAB462	Virtuo bottles 8-10mL per Aer/Ana bottle 1-3mL Pedi bottle	<24 hrs room temp.	2 sets per 24 hours	5 days
				Do NOT refrigerate	
Blood Bank Transfusion Reaction Culture	LAB5690	Blood bag, Plasma, Cryoprecipitate, Granulocytes, or HPC Stem Cells (<i>for Stem cells also order a blood fungus culture</i>)	ASAP - Refrigerated	DO NOT submit segments	5 days
Body fluid (<i>Aerobic, Anaerobic - LAB2305, gram stain</i>)	LAB269	Sterile screw top container	<24 hrs room temp.	2mL minimum	5 days
Catheter Tip	LAB224	Sterile screw top container	<24hrs refrigerated	Foley catheters are unacceptable	2 days
CSF (<i>Includes gram stain</i>)	LAB268	Sterile screw top container	<24 hrs refrigerated		5 days
Device Culture	LAB5682	Sterile screw top container	<24 hrs refrigerated		5 days (14 days for Actinomyces)
Ear (<i>Includes gram stain</i>)	LAB20400	Red top swab, Blue top swab, Eswab, or aspirate in sterile container	<24 hrs room temp.		2 days
Environmental Culture	LAB13091	Sterile screw top container, swab, plated media	<24 hrs refrigerated		48 hrs – 7 days

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Eye <i>(Includes gram stain)</i>	LAB2310	Red or blue top swab or Eswab	<24 hrs room temp.		5 days
Fungal- Hair/Skin/Nails <i>(Includes fungal smear)</i>	LAB0256	Scrapings-enough to cover the head of a thumbtack- in a sterile screw top container	<24 hrs room temp.	Do NOT refrigerate; swabs are not recommended. Fungal smears performed Mon-Fri day shift only.	4 weeks
Fungal- Fluid/Tissue/Biopsy <i>(Includes fungal smear)</i>	LAB2312	Sterile screw top container	<24 hrs room temp.	Do NOT refrigerate; swabs are not recommended. Fungal smears performed Mon-Fri day shift only.	4 weeks
Fungal Blood	LAB242	Isolator tube	STAT	Do NOT refrigerate	4 weeks
Genital <i>(Includes gram stain)</i>	LAB2314	Red or blue top swab or Eswab	<24 hrs room temp.	Do NOT refrigerate	3 days
Group A Strep Perianal <i>(Specific organism screen)</i>	LAB2326	Red top swab or Eswab	<24 hrs room temp.		2 days
Group B Strep for susceptibility only <i>(Reflex from positive PCR)</i>	LAB13367		<24 hrs refrigerated	**Reflexed from positive PCR test for susceptibility only**	2 days
Nocardia <i>(Specific organism screen)</i>	LAB2326	Sterile screw top container OR Red top swab	<24 hrs refrigerated		14 days
Upper Respiratory – Nasal, NP, Sinus <i>(Includes gram stain)</i>	LAB900	Sterile screw top container	<24 hrs refrigerated	1mL minimum	2 days
Lower Respiratory Sputum, Bronch, BAL, Trach & Quantitative. <i>(Includes gram stain)</i>	LAB228	Sterile screw top container	<24 hrs refrigerated	1mL minimum	2 days
Specific Organism Culture	LAB2326	Red or blue top swab or Eswab. Pure isolate.	<24 hrs room temp.	Need to specify what organism you are wanting identified.	2-7 days
Reflexed from positive PCR test for susceptibility only <i>Salmonella, Shigella, and Yersinia,</i>	Stool Culture LAB0132	Sterile Container, Cary Blair		Stool Culture – Positive PCR Salmonella /Shigella	2 days

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				Yersinia culture - Positive PCR Yersinia	
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Biopsy/tissue Culture (<i>Aerobic, Anaerobic – LAB233, gram stain</i>)	LAB898	Sterile screw top container with sterile moistened gauze	Refrigerated	Do NOT place in culturette. Do NOT add fixative or formalin.	5 days
Throat	LAB236	Red or blue top swab or Eswab	<24 hrs room temp.	1 sample/day Cotton swabs or wooden shafts will be rejected	2 days
Urine	LAB239	Sterile screw top container or Urine preservation system	<24 hrs refrigerated	1 sample/day	18 hours
Urine Comprehensive (Orderable by Infectious Disease or Urologist only)	LAB23842	Sterile screw top container or Urine preservation system	<24 hrs refrigerated	1 sample/day	48 hours
Wound (Aerobic only and includes gram stain)	LAB897	Red or blue top swab OR aspirate in sterile screw top container, or Eswab	<24 hrs room temp.		2 days
Wound (Aerobic, Anaerobic – LAB233, and includes gram stain)	LAB503	Red or blue top swab OR aspirate in sterile screw top container, or Eswab	<24 hrs room temp.		2 days
MICROSCOPIC TEST	ORDER CODE	COLLECTION CONTAINER	TRANSPORT	LIMITS	TAT
Gram Stain	LAB250	Sterile screw top container OR swab			1 hour
KOH	LAB251	Sterile screw top container OR swab	<24 hrs room temp.		24 hrs Monday-Friday
KOH (Hair, Skin, Nails)	LAB255	Sterile screw top container OR swab	<24 hrs room temp.		24 hrs Monday-Friday
Pinworm	LAB248	Pinworm collection device	<24 hrs room temp.		24 hrs Monday- Friday
RAPID TEST	ORDER CODE	COLLECTION CONTAINER	TRANSPORT	LIMITS	TAT
Giardia/Cryptosporidium	LAB24007	Pink and gray Parapaks	<24 hrs	Diapers and leaking containers will be rejected.	1 day
Cryptosporidium only	LAB907				
Giardia only	LAB259				

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Stool Lactoferrin	LAB731	Sterile screw top container	Refrigerated or room temp 2-week stability from collection.	Stool in preservative will be rejected	1 hour
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RAPID TEST	ORDER CODE	COLLECTION CONTAINER	TRANSPORT	LIMITS	TAT
Occult blood FIT	LAB2502	Polymedco inoculate specimen bottle	Room Temp: 15 days Refrigerated: 30 days		24 hours
Occult blood Gastric	LAB696	Sterile screw top container	<24 hrs room temp.		24 hours
Group A Strep	LAB885	Red top swab ONLY	Room temp. STAT	Do not use swabs with cotton tips or wooden shafts. Negative specimens will reflex Throat Culture.	1 hour
Cryptococcus Ag Screen, CSF <i>(Titer will reflex if positive)</i>	LAB3015	Aseptically collected CSF	2-8°C or <-20°C		24 hours (Monday through Friday only)
Cryptococcus Ag Screen, Serum <i>(Titer will reflex if positive)</i>	LAB779	Sterile, non-hemolyzed serum	2-8°C or <-20°C	Hemolyzed specimens could lead to false negative results	24 hours (Monday through Friday)
C. diff Toxin A&B	LAB257	Sterile screw top container	2-8°C for up to 4 days	Performed as reflex test from positive PCR tests on in-patients only.	Once per shift (3 shifts in 24 hours)
PCR TEST	ORDER CODE	COLLECTION CONTAINER	TRANSPORT	LIMITS	TAT
Routine Group B Strep Screen PCR	LAB1371	Red/Blue top swab, Eswab	GBS LB – Swabs will be stored at room temperature if processed in Lim broth within 24 hours. Swabs that cannot be processed in Lim broth within 24 hours will be stored at 2-8°C for up to 6 days. Inoculated Lim broth is stable up to 72 hours at 2-8 °C.	If positive and penicillin allergy is documented in EPIC, then culture will be reflexed. If allergy not documented in EPIC, please call Micro to perform susceptibility.	24 hours
				One every 7 days Formed stool will be rejected.	

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C. difficile PCR only	LAB2603	Sterile screw top container	<24 hrs room temp.	It is recommended not to accept >2 specimen on a patient.	<24 hrs
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PCR TEST	ORDER CODE	COLLECTION CONTAINER	TRANSPORT	LIMITS	TAT
C. difficile PCR w/Toxin Reflex	LAB24937	Sterile screw top container	<24 hrs room temp.	One every 7 days Formed stool will be rejected. It is recommended not to accept >2 specimen on a patient.	<24 hrs
Gonorrhea PCR	LAB262	Male and female: Urine in a sterile container	<24 hrs room temp.	Gene Xpert collection material required.	<24 hrs
Chlamydia PCR	LAB12872	Female: Pink collection tube		Urine container must be filled to blue line.	
Gonorrhea/Chlamydia PCR	LAB1376				
Trichomonas PCR	LAB921				
Vaginal Pathogens	LAB13043	Female: Pink collection tube		Gene Xpert collection material required.	
COVID 19	LAB23057	NPS swab in Viral Transport Medium	VTM Specimens	PCR - Performed on Cepheid	<24 hrs
Flu	LAB12992	Nasal swab in Viral Transport Medium	<24 hrs room temp.		
RSV	LAB13379		7 days 2-8°C		
Flu & RSV	LAB23732				
COVID & Flu	LAB25371				
COVID, Flu, RSV	LAB25372				
MRSA/SA, NAAT	LAB24325	Nasal swab - Red Top (Liquid Stuart Medium; ex Copan/BBL/Cardinal Health)	24 hours at room temp. 5 days at 2-8°C	PCR – Performed on Cepheid	24 hours
Meningitis Panel	LAB24329	CSF in Sterile screw top container	<24 hrs room temp	PCR – Performed on Biofire	2 hrs
Viral Respiratory Panel with B. paraptussis and COVID19.	LAB1307	NPS swab in Viral Transport Medium	<24 hrs room temp.	PCR - Performed on Biofire	<24 hrs

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PCR TEST	ORDER CODE	COLLECTION CONTAINER	TRANSPORT	LIMITS	TAT
Stool Enteric Panel PCR	LAB24179	Non-formed Stool in Cary Blair, Fecal Eswab, or Eswab.	48 hours after collection stored at 2-8°C.	<p>PCR – Performed on Verigene</p> <p>It is recommended not to accept >2 specimen on a patient.</p> <p>Positive PCR will reflex culture for susceptibility:</p> <p>Stool Culture – Positive PCR Salmonella /Shigella</p> <p>Yersinia culture - Positive PCR Yersinia</p> <p>*Formed stools will be rejected.</p>	<24 hrs

Collection Procedures

Aerobic/Anaerobic Cultures

- Gather supplies, wash hands and don gloves
- Remove dressing to expose the wound/site
- Clean skin surface with an antiseptic solution, sterile water, or sterile saline
- Exudate: if enough drainage is present-
 - gently aspirate (without a needle) 1mL into a syringe
 - Cap syringe and place it in a biohazard bag
- Exudate: if not enough drainage is present-
 - Insert swab deeply into the wound, avoiding outer edges, while gently rotating to collect as much sample as possible
 - Insert swab back into collection tube
 - Do NOT re-open for anaerobic cultures; Exposure to air will destroy anaerobic organisms
- Perform wound care as appropriate
- Remove gloves and wash hands

*Do not request cultures from open, superficial lesions as this usually represents contamination or colonization

Fungal

- Nails-
 - Remove nail polish. Clean nail(s) with alcohol swab
 - Use a #10 scalpel blade to scrape the lesion of the infected nail; discard the first 4 or 5 scrapings
 - Collect scraping from the proximal to the distal end of the nail over a sterile container
 - Debris under the nail plate should also be collected
- Hair-
 - Use sterile scissors and forceps to clip or pluck hair from infected area
 - Place in a sterile container
- Skin-
 - Briskly clean the area/lesion with alcohol swabs, sterile water, or sterile saline
 - Use a #10 scalpel blade to scrape the lesion into a sterile container

Nasopharyngeal

- Insert swab into back of nostril until resistance is met; Remove swab
- Repeat for opposite nostril
- Place swab in VTM if required

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Nasal

- Insert the swab into a nostril.
- Rotate the swab against the inside of the nostril for 3 seconds while applying pressure with a finger to the outside of the nostril.
- Repeat on the other nostril with same swab.
- Place swab in VTM if required.

Pinworm

- Collect in a dark room if possible. Use a flashlight to visualize perianal area
- Press tape firmly against right and left perianal folds
- Place paddle in specimen cup

*Do NOT send stool as the specimen for this test

Sputum

- Have patient rinse mouth with water to reduce contamination
- Have patient cough deeply and expectorate into collection container
 - 1mL is required for culture and cytology
 - 5mL is required for AFB

*Sputum should NOT contain nasal drainage or saliva

Throat

- Depress tongue with depressor
- Swab areas of exudation on either tonsil or tonsil beds; avoid the tongue and cheek

Urine

- Male:
 - Patient should cleanse the area around the meatus with an antiseptic towelette or washcloth with soap and water
 - Patient will begin voiding
 - Use a sterile container to collect a midstream urine specimen
 - Avoid last few drops of urine as they may be contaminated with prostate secretions
- Female:
 - Patient should separate labia to expose urethral orifice and cleanse around meatus with antiseptic towelette or washcloth with soap & water
 - Begin voiding, keeping labia separated
 - Use a sterile container to collect a midstream urine specimen

All patient samples:

- **Require a physician's order**
- **Must be labeled in the presence of the patient**
 - **Use two patient identifiers (name, DOB, MR#, social security, etc.)**
 - **Collection container/tube MUST be labeled with two patient identifiers, time and date of collection, and sample source**
- **Contact the lab (806-725-4252) for amount of specimen needed if several tests are ordered or for tests you are unfamiliar with.**