

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	Bactec bottles 10-20mL Aer/Ana bottles 1-3mL Pedi bottle	<72 hrs room temp.	2 sets per 24 hours Do NOT refrigerate	5 days
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 Yersinia culture - Positive PCR Yersinia	2 days

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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 (<i>Orderable by Infectious Disease or Urologist only</i>)	LAB23842	Sterile screw top container or Urine preservation system	<24 hrs refrigerated	1 sample/day	48 hours
Wound (<i>Aerobic only and includes gram stain</i>)	LAB897	Red or blue top swab OR aspirate in sterile screw top container, or Eswab	<24 hrs room temp.		2 days
Wound (<i>Aerobic, Anaerobic – LAB233, and includes gram stain</i>)	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 (<i>Hair, Skin, Nails</i>)	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				
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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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
C. difficile PCR only	LAB2603	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

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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. Urine container must be filled to blue line.	<24 hrs
Chlamydia PCR	LAB12872	Female: Pink collection tube			
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		
Meningitis Panel	LAB24329	CSF in Sterile screw top container	<24 hrs room temp	PCR – Performed on Biofire	2 hrs
Viral Respiratory Panel with B. parapertussis 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.	PCR – Performed on Verigene It is recommended not to accept >2 specimen on a patient. Positive PCR will reflex culture for susceptibility: Stool Culture – Positive PCR Salmonella /Shigella Yersinia culture - Positive PCR Yersinia *Formed stools will be rejected.	<24 hrs
Fecal Transplant	LAB12905			MUST request directed from Microbiology. Need 1 week notice.	

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.**