

Division of Laboratory Medicine

Bacteriology

Mouth swab

General information

Collection container (including preservatives): Collect specimens in appropriate CE marked leak proof containers and transport specimens in sealed plastic bags.

Collect with liquid eSwab and transport in sealed plastic bags.

Specimen type: Mouth Swab



Collection: Collect specimens before antimicrobial therapy where possible. To assure that the preconditions of the sampling for oral infections are comparable it is advised that patients should not:

1. Eat or drink within 2 hours
2. Brush their teeth within 2 hours
3. Use any mouth rinse or disinfectant within 2 hours prior to sampling

If possible samples should be taken in the morning under fasting conditions.

Unless otherwise indicated collect each swab for bacterial and/or fungal culture and place in appropriate transport medium.

Collect specimens other than swabs into appropriate CE marked leak proof containers and place in sealed plastic bags

Sample pus if present otherwise sample any lesions or inflamed areas.

A tongue depressor or spatula may be helpful to aid vision and avoid contamination from other parts of the mouth.

Liquid eSwabs contain 1ml of liquid. No liquid should be discarded when collecting sample. Samples with insufficient liquid will be discarded.

Specimen transport (e.g at room temperature, or within 4 hrs): Use aseptic technique. Unless otherwise stated, swabs for bacterial and fungal culture should taken with a liquid eSwab.

Minimum volume of sample: 1ml. Liquid eSwabs contain 1ml of liquid. No liquid should be discarded when collecting sample. Samples with insufficient liquid will be discarded

Special precautions: If processing is delayed, refrigeration is preferable to storage at ambient temperature.

Delays of over 48hr are undesirable.

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Laboratory information

Measurement units: Not applicable

Biological reference units: Not applicable

Turnaround time for provisional result (working days): 1 day

Turnaround time to final result (working days): 2-3 days

Clinical information

Clinical decision points: Not applicable

Factors known to significantly affect the results: Collect specimens before antimicrobial therapy where possible.

Specimens should be transported and processed as soon as possible.

(Last updated September 2019)