

Division of Laboratory Medicine

Meningococcal Reference Unit

Neisseria meningitidis: Serogrouping and outer membrane typing

General information

Collection container (including preservatives): Not applicable

Specimen type: Referral of viable pure cultures on slopes and transport swabs

Collection including preservative: Not applicable

Specimen transport: Only submit viable isolate samples in approved packaging (UN3373) which are suitable for Royal Mail post (airfreight) or commercial couriers such as HAYS DX.

Agar slopes: where possible pure, viable cultures; inoculated on chocolate (heated) blood agar, blood agar or Dorset egg slopes after establishing growth by overnight incubation at 37°C.

On occasion it may be necessary to submit an unincubated culture. This can save time but requires a heavy inoculum to ensure survival in transport. Please indicate on the request form if the material (slope) has not been incubated.

Short-term storage of sloped cultures is optimal at 30°C if there are delays before submission.

Minimum volume of sample: Not applicable

Special precautions: Non-viable cultures: cultures which are no longer viable may still be considered for characterisation by molecular based methods after consultation with the MRU. A heavy inoculum of the inert material on a slope may be submitted with an appropriate request form.

Laboratory information

Measurement units: Not applicable

Biological reference units: Not applicable

Turnaround time: Serogroup telephoned to sending laboratory within 2-3 working days.
The final printed report is submitted within 7-10 working days

Clinical information

Clinical decision points: Not applicable

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Factors known to significantly affect the results: Contaminated culture will delay the results.

(Last updated August 2019)