

## Division of Laboratory Medicine

### Bacteriology

# Abscesses and Deep-Seated Wound Infections

Abscesses are accumulations of pus in the tissues and any organism isolated from them may be of significance. They occur in many parts of the body as superficial infections or as deep-seated infections associated with any internal organ.

## General information

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

Avoid accidental injury when pus is aspirated.

**Collection:** Collect specimens before antimicrobial therapy where possible.

Samples of pus are preferred to swabs. However, pus swabs are often received (when using swabs, the deepest part of the wound should be sampled, avoiding the superficial microflora).

Unless otherwise stated, swabs for bacterial and fungal culture should be taken with liquid eSwabs.

### Pus



### eSwab for Oxford Road Campus



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

**Specimen type:** Abscess pus, abscess swab, deep-seated pus swab, post-operative wound swab, wound exudates.

**Specimen transport:** Specimens should be transported and processed as soon as possible.

The volume of specimen influences the transport time that is acceptable. Large volumes of purulent material maintain the viability of anaerobes for longer.

**Minimum volume of sample:** Minimum volume of 1mL of pus.

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Swabs should be well soaked in pus. The liquid in the eSwab should NOT be discarded. The laboratory cannot process samples with <1ml of liquid remaining in the swab and these samples will be discarded.

**Special precautions:**

If processing is delayed, refrigeration is preferable to storage at ambient temperature. Delays of over 48hr are undesirable.

### 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):** Direct culture 5-7 days

### Clinical information

**Clinical decision points:** Not applicable

**Factors known to significantly affect the results:** The recovery of anaerobes is compromised if the transport time exceeds 3hr

**(Last updated November 2023)**