

Laboratory Medicine Care Division

Mycology

Fungal culture – genital tract swabs

Genital tract swabs, including high vaginal swab (HVS), vaginal discharge, vulval swab, labial swab, cervical swab, endocervical swab, penile swab, urethral swab, and genital ulcer swab.

General information

Turnaround time:

Culture result (species detected or negative) available by 5 days.

Susceptibility test turnaround times depend on when the culture is available for testing. Typically, this is an additional 2-3 days.

Sample type/container:

Swabs: eSwab



Collect into appropriate transport medium and transport in sealed plastic bags.

Transportation

- Samples should be placed into a plastic Ziploc bag, sealed, and then placed into another sealed plastic Ziploc bag (preferably with a biohazard label on the outside), as shown below.

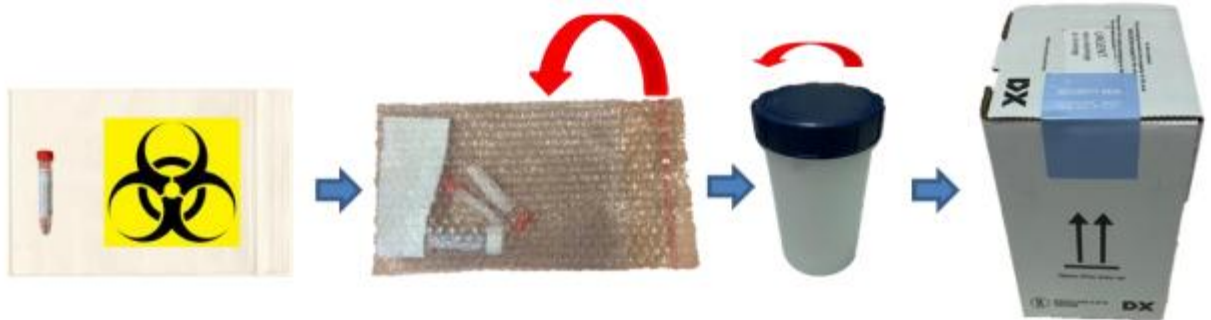


- Category B transport boxes or an appropriate transport bag (i.e., one which adheres to regulations governing the transportation of diagnostic specimens) must be used for transport by road or between Manchester University Foundation Trust sites (but are not necessary within Wythenshawe hospital grounds).

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- Please see below for packaging requirements.



For more information - <https://mrcm.org.uk/sample-collection/>

Laboratory Information

Biological interval/clinical decision values: N/A

Clinical Information

Collect specimens before antifungal therapy is started, where possible. Provide details about any ongoing or recent antifungal therapy.

Cervical and high vaginal swabs should be taken with the aid of a speculum. It is important to avoid vulval contamination of the swab. Use aseptic technique.

High vaginal swabs:

After the introduction of the speculum, the swab should be rolled firmly over the surface of the vaginal vault. Please use an eSwab and ensure the liquid remains in the tube.

Cervical swabs:

After introduction of the speculum to the vagina, the swab should be rotated inside the endocervix. Please use an eSwab and ensure the liquid remains in the tube.

Urethral swabs:

Contamination with micro-organisms from the vulva or the foreskin should be avoided. Thin swabs are available for collection of specimens.

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

Specimens should be transported and processed as soon as possible. If processing is delayed, refrigeration is preferable to storage at ambient temperature. Delays of over 48 hours may result in overgrowth of some fungi inhibiting the growth or masking the presence of others.

(Last updated May 2026)