



Microbiology Specimen Collection Manual

University of Florida Health Pathology Laboratories Microbiology Laboratory

Located at UF Health Shands Hospital, North Tower

Microbiology Section: Room 3164

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University of Florida Pathology Laboratories' Microbiology Laboratory makes microbiology, bacteriology and mycology testing available for outpatient medical facilities. The Microbiology Laboratory is located at UF Health Shands Hospital and is directed by a board-certified infectious disease physician, managed by a master's-level supervisor and technical specialist, and staffed by medical technologists and laboratory technicians who are licensed by the state of Florida Board of Professional Regulations. Technical personnel staff the Microbiology Laboratory 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and samples can be received at any time.

The Laboratory has dedicated and qualified personnel who are committed to providing excellent service, using advanced technology and professional attention to each patient specimen. Specimens of surgical biopsies, tissue, wounds and body fluids are submitted for culture and processed in microbiology. The specimens are inoculated onto a variety of differential and selective media and incubated for the growth and identification of potential pathogenic organisms.

Collection

- Each specimen should be considered potentially infectious and handled using Standard Precautions.
- Each specimen should be collected properly in tightly capped containers to avoid leakage and possible rejection of the specimen.
- The most appropriate specimens for isolation of anaerobes are tissue or fluids submitted in anaerobic transport tubes.

Delivery Address

During routine hours of operation, specimens can be delivered to the following address through the United States Postal Service or by a courier service:

UF Health Pathology Laboratories

4800 SW 35th Drive

Gainesville, FL 32608

**University of Florida Health Pathology Laboratories | 4800 SW 35th Drive | Gainesville, FL 32608
Toll-Free: 888.375.LABS (5227) | Local: 352.265.9900 | Fax: 352.265.9901 | pathlabs.ufl.edu**



After-hours deliveries must be arranged in advance by contacting the Laboratory. If attempting to contact the Laboratory outside of its normal hours of operation, call **800.633.2122** and ask to speak with the pathology resident on call. For hematopathology services, ask to speak with the hematopathology attending physician on call; the operator will have your call returned as soon as possible.

Mailing Guidelines

Federal Express and U.S. Postal Service regulations require fluid specimen packaging to include:

1. A watertight primary receptacle;
2. A watertight secondary packaging;
3. Absorbent material placed between the primary receptacle and the secondary packaging; and
4. A sturdy outside packaging, constructed of corrugated fiberboard, wood, metal or plastic.

Note: When sending slides and/or paraffin blocks, be sure to cushion them sufficiently to reduce the possibility of breakage or crushing during transport/shipment.

Ambient Specimens

These specimens do not require special temperatures or handling. If you have any concerns regarding the effect of extreme weather conditions on specimens, please contact customer service.

Specimen Labeling

The following information **must** be on the specimen label when submitting a sample for processing:

1. The patient's full name
2. The patient's social security number and/or medical record number
3. The collection date of the specimen
4. For non-body fluid submissions, the type of specimen and/or tissue site

Refrigerated Specimens

Place the specimen and cold pack in a sealed plastic bag. Care should be taken to buffer (e.g., a paper towel) the cold pack from the specimens. Label the outside of the packaging: "**REFRIGERATED SPECIMEN - DO NOT FREEZE**"

Frozen Specimens

Place five pounds of dry ice around the specimen(s). Use only plastic vials (not glass) and do not fill vials more than three-quarters full.

Shipping Bodily Fluids

Shipments of bodily fluids (blood, plasma, semen, urine, tissue, excrement, etc.), either human or animal, must be packaged in shipper-provided containers that can withstand leakage of contents, shocks, pressure changes and other conditions incidental to ordinary handling in transportation.

- Outer packaging must contain sufficient absorbent materials to absorb the entire content of the inner packaging (specimens) in the event of any leakage.

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- Federal Express (FedEx) reserves the right to refuse any bodily fluid shipment not packaged as stated above, which in turn is not tendered in a FedEx Clinical Pac™ container. Exceptions include specimens with packaging dimensions too large to fit entirely within a Clinical Pac™, allowing for proper closure of the container. These may be shipped in shipper provided packaging alone but the packaging must bear a FedEx Clinical Pac™ label to be acceptable for transport by FedEx.

Notice

The special lab pack label for large shipper-prepared packages can be obtained by calling **800.463.3339** or by contacting your local Federal Express (FedEx) courier. It is unnecessary to label packages containing dry ice for preservation of clinical materials as "hazardous" and should be avoided. Instead, FedEx guidelines indicate that the following information **must** be printed on the outside of a specimen package containing dry ice:

- **DRY ICE, (# of) LBS.**
- **UN1845**
- **FOR MEDICAL USE**

Reporting

UF Health Pathology Laboratories complies with Florida law by reporting certain state-defined reportable diseases to the Florida Department of Health. Reports are available via fax or through our **PathLabs 24/7** Physicians' Web Portal. If you wish to receive an electronic version of your pathology report, call our Client Services Department at **888.375.LABS (5227)**.

Courier Services

UF Health Pathology Laboratories' Client Services Department can arrange for couriers to pick up specimens from your office. In some areas, specimen pick-up and report delivery may be available through independent contractors. Prepaid overnight courier services are available throughout the continental United States courtesy of Federal Express.

Test Requests

A properly completed request form must accompany all samples. Requested information includes relevant clinical history and necessary demographic data to assist with the consultation and facilitate the billing process.

Test Additions

If sufficient specimen volume remains after the initial tests are completed, additional tests may be requested by telephone. Before add-on tests can be processed, test requests must be in writing and faxed to UF Health Pathology Laboratories' Client Services Department at **352.265.9901**.

Instructions for Microbiology Specimen Collection and Transport

Specimen	Collection Equipment	Transport	Instructions (Comments)
Anaerobe	Optimum recovery of anaerobes occurs with tissue or curetting, which can be placed into the anaerobic collection container. Aspirates collected in a syringe (submitted without needles) are the next best specimen. Swabs are the least likely to yield clinically relevant results.	Do not refrigerate; use anaerobe transport tube or syringe without needle	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Avoid all O₂ exposure. 2. Use anaerobe transport tubes or expel air from the syringe . 3. Do not submit needle-syringe; syringe with cap only 4. Label properly 5. Send two tubes if STAT gram stain is requested. 6. Deliver promptly to Lab
Genital	Swab	Transport medium (if more than a two-hour delay)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collect the culture with a swab inserted through a speculum. 2. Avoid touching the swab to uninfected surfaces. 3. Clean the external urethra before taking a urethra specimen. 4. For GC, inoculate TM at bedside, if possible. 5. Label properly 6. Deliver promptly to lab
Nasopharynx	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calcium alginate swab • Transport medium 	Do not refrigerate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nasal speculum helpful. 2. Pass through the nose into nasopharynx. 3. Allow to remain for a few seconds. 4. Carefully withdraw. 5. Label properly 6. Deliver promptly to lab
Nose	Swab	Transport medium	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Swab anterior nares only. 2. Culture quickly. 3. Label properly. 4. Deliver promptly to lab.
Sinus	Swab (small)	Transport medium	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Insert and remove quickly. 2. Label properly 3. Deliver promptly to lab
Throat	Swab	Transport medium (if more than a two-hour delay)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use tongue blade 2. Sample only back of throat between and around tonsil area thoroughly 3. Avoid cheeks, teeth, etc. 4. Label properly
Superficial Wound	Sterile container, swab/ syringe	Transport to the Lab quickly	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Disinfect surface with Hibistat 2. Aspirate deepest portion of lesion 3. Swab affected area; crush ampule of culturette 4. Send to Lab immediately
Burn Wound	Sterile container; swab	Transport to the Lab quickly	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Disinfect surface with Hibistat 2. Swab area; crush ampule of culturette; send to Lab 3. Use dermal punch; obtain 3 - 4 mm punch bx; no formalin; deliver promptly to lab