

# Anaerobic Culture



## Does this test have other names?

Wound culture

## What is this test?

This test looks for certain types of bacteria in a wound or a fluid sample from an infection site. These bacteria are called anaerobic because they don't need oxygen to grow. An anaerobic culture means the test is done without letting oxygen get to the sample.

Infections caused by anaerobic bacteria can occur almost anywhere in your body. These may be infections in your mouth or lungs, diabetes-related foot infections, infected bites, and gangrene. Finding the specific bacteria that's causing your infection helps your healthcare provider choose the right treatment.

It may take up to a week to get the results. That's because any bacteria from the sample need time to grow so they can be looked at in a lab.

## Why do I need this test?

You may have this test if your healthcare provider needs to find out the type of bacteria that's causing an infection in your body. Your provider may order this test based on wound location, tissue damage, an unpleasant smelling wound, or a sore related to the infection.

You may also have this test to see whether treatment for an infection is working.

## What other tests might I have along with this test?

Your healthcare provider may also order other tests, depending on your symptoms. These tests may include:

- Gram stain
- Complete blood count, or CBC
- Blood culture
- Urine culture
- Stool sample
- MRSA screening. MRSA (methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*) are bacteria that cause several difficult-to-treat infections.
- Imaging studies, such as ultrasound or CT scan, to find areas of infection or damaged tissue

## What do my test results mean?

Test results may vary depending on your age, gender, health history, and other things. Your test results may be different depending on the lab used. They may not mean you have a problem. Ask your healthcare provider what your test results mean for you.

Normal results are negative. This means that no bacteria grew in the sample. But you may still have an infection because anaerobic bacteria are difficult to grow in the lab.

A positive result means that bacteria grew in your sample. But the bacteria that grow in a culture may not be the ones causing your infection.

## **How is this test done?**

This test needs a sample of fluid or tissue from your wound or sore. Your healthcare provider may use a cotton swab to get the sample. Or they may use a needle to draw fluid from your wound.

## **Does this test pose any risks?**

This test poses few risks. You may have pain or discomfort when your healthcare provider collects the sample.

## **What might affect my test results?**

Anaerobic bacteria are difficult to grow, and some bacteria may not grow in this test. This means you may have a false-negative result. Anaerobic bacteria picked up in the sample that are present in the area of the infection but are not causing the infection can also affect your results.

## **How do I get ready for this test?**

You don't need to prepare for this test. But be sure your healthcare provider knows about all medicines, herbs, vitamins, and supplements you are taking. This includes any antibiotics, medicines that don't need a prescription, and any illicit drugs you may use.

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