

Laboratory Specimens - Infection Control

Site Applicability

All PHC Acute and Long Term Care Sites.

Practice Level

Basic: All direct and indirect care staff

Standard

All laboratory specimens will be handled as if they contain an infectious organism.

Specimens will be collected to gain useful clinical information. Unnecessary samples may be uncomfortable for the patient/resident and wastes hospital resources.

Culture specimens may be indicated when there is:

- A lack of positive response to treatment.
- An increase in purulence (pus) or a change in the quality of pus or drainage (colour, odour, consistency, etc.).
- Persistence of clinical signs and symptoms of infection.

Care will be taken in collection of specimens for culture and sensitivity (C&S) to assure as accurate a result as possible. Accurate results of specimen collection depend on:

- Proper method of collection
- Proper storage of specimen
- Careful transport of specimen

Refer to [Laboratory Manual](#) and/or [PHC SHOP guidelines](#) for further information on specific specimen collection.

Procedure

- Use a [point of care risk assessment](#) to determine the appropriate [personal protective equipment](#) to wear during specimen collection to avoid contact with blood or body fluids.
- When collecting specimens avoid contaminating the outside of the container.
- If the outside of the container becomes contaminated, clean with disinfectant wipe.

- Place container in biohazard bag. Ensure outside of bag is clean to prevent inadvertent exposure of staff to the infectious material and contamination of the environment. Keep requisition separate from specimen so that it does not become contaminated.
- Send specimen to lab or store in specimen fridge/bin for pickup.

Related Documents

- [B-00-07-13088](#) - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - Infection Control
- [B-00-07-13081](#) - Point of Care Risk Assessment - IPAC Best Practice Guideline
- [B-00-07-13045](#) - Routine Practices - Infection Control

References

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). 2007 Guideline for Isolation Precautions: Preventing Transmission of Infectious Agents in Healthcare Settings. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/pdf/guidelines/isolation-guidelines-H.pdf>
- Public Health Agency of Canada. (2017). Routine Practices and Additional Precautions for Preventing the Transmission of Infection in Healthcare Settings. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/routine-practices-precautions-healthcare-associated-infections.html>

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