

Bacteriology, Mycology, and Mycobacteriology Specimen Collection Guidelines^a – Genital

Specimen Type	Collection		Time and Temp		Replica limits	Comments
	Guidelines	Device and/or minimum volume	Local Transport ^b storage	Courier or local		
Genital (female): Amniotic	1. Aspirate via amniocentesis, cesarean section, or intrauterine catheter.	Transport Tube or sterile tube, ≥ 1 ml	≤ 15 min, RT	≤ 24 h, RT	None	Swabbing or aspiration of vaginal membrane is <i>not</i> acceptable because of the potential for culture contamination by commensal vaginal flora.
Bartholin	1. Disinfect skin with a iodine preparation. 2. Aspirate fluid from ducts.	Transport Tube ≥ 1 ml	≤ 2 h, RT	≤ 24 h, RT	1/day	
Cervical	1. Visualize the cervix using a speculum without lubricant. 2. Remove mucus and secretions from the cervix with a swab and discard the swab. 3. Firmly, yet gently, sample the endocervical canal with a newly obtained sterile swab.	ESwab transport system. GC Selective plate.	≤ 2 h, RT	≤ 24 h, RT	1/day	See information on virus and chlamydia collection and transport needs. Neisseria gonorrhoeae is found in exudates, whereas chlamydiae infect specific cells.
Cul-de-sac	Submit aspirate or fluid	Transport Tube > 1 ml	≤ 2 h, RT	≤ 24 h, RT	1/day	
Endometrial	1. Collect transcervical aspirate via a telescoping catheter. 2. Transfer the entire amount to an anaerobic transport system.	Transport Tube ≥ 1 ml	≤ 2 h, RT	≤ 24 h, RT	1/day	
Products of conception	1. Submit a portion of tissue in a sterile container. 2. If obtained by cesarean section, immediately transfer it to an anaerobic transport system	Sterile tube or Transport Tube	≤ 2 h, RT	≤ 24 h, RT	1/day	Do not process lochia. Culture of this specimen may or may not provide clinically relevant results, and such results can be misleading.
Urethral	Collect 1h after patient has urinated. 1. Remove exudate from the urethral orifice. 2. Collect discharge material on a swab by massaging the urethra against the pubic symphysis through the vagina.	ESwab transport system.	≤ 2 h, RT	≤ 24 h, RT	1/day	If no discharge can be obtained, wash the external urethra with Betadine soap with rinse with water. Insert a urethrogenital swab 2-4 cm. into the urethra; rotate swab for 2 s.
Vaginal	1. Wipe away an excessive amount of secretion or discharge. 2. Obtain secretions from the mucosal membrane of the vaginal vault with a sterile swab or pipette. 3. If a smear is also requested, use a second swab.	ESwab transport system.	≤ 2 h, RT	≤ 24 h, RT	1/day	For intrauterine devices, place entire device in a sterile container and submit at RT. Gram staining is recommended for confirmation of bacterial vaginosis. Results from cultures are often inaccurate and misleading.
Genital (female or male): Lesion	1. Clean the lesion with sterile saline and remove the surface of the lesion with a sterile scalpel blade. 2. Allow transudate to accumulate. 3. Pressing the base of the lesion, <i>firmly</i> sample exudate with a sterile swab.	ESwab transport system.	≤ 2 h, RT	≤ 24 h, RT	1/day	Specimens for syphilis should not be submitted for culture.

Genital (male): Prostate	1. Cleanse the glans with soap and water. 2. Massage the prostate through the rectum. 3. Collect fluid on a sterile swab or in a sterile tube.	ESwab transport system or sterile tube	≤ 2 h, RT	≤ 24 h, RT	1/day	More relevant results may be obtained by adding a urine specimen immediately before and after massage to indicate urethral and bladder organisms. Ejaculate can also be cultured.
Urethra	Insert a urethrogenital swab 2-4 cm. into the urethral lumen, rotate the swab, and leave it in place for at least 2 s to facilitate absorption.	ESwab transport system. GC selective place	≤ 2 h, RT	≤ 24 h, RT	1/day	See information on virus and chlamydia collection and transport needs.
<p>^a ETOH = ethanol; RT = room temperature; i.v. = intravenous; AFB = acid-fast bacilli; CSF = cerebrospinal fluid; BAP = blood agar plate; CHOC = chocolate agar; BHI = brain heart infusion; PVA = polyvinyl alcohol fixative.</p> <p>^b All specimens should be transported in leakproof plastic bags having a separate compartment for the requisition.</p> <p>^c Temperature</p>						