

Microbiology Section Specimen Rejection Criteria

Specimen Rejection Criteria

Leaking Specimens

Leaking specimens pose a problem in microbiological specimens:

- 1) they may be an infectious hazard to those handling the specimen
- 2) they may provide misleading result if they are contaminated and the contaminants are interpreted as pathogens

- Leaking specimens are not routinely processed in Microbiology
- The ward is notified immediately by telephone; reason for rejection and the name of the person accepting the telephone notification is documented in the computer.
- LIS QA Code: LEAK
- LIS Report Comment: Specimen leaked in transit. Informed on ... floor
Culture not done.
DO NOT remove the specimen from the biohazard bag when accessioning.
- Irreplaceable specimen may be processed but a comment is added to the report indicating possible contamination.
In a biological safety cabinet, open the biohazard bag and place the specimen onto paper towels and spray the specimen with VIRALEX. Leave for 5 minutes. Plant the specimen and then place the specimen into a new clean biohazard bag. Change gloves.

Unlabelled / Mislabeled Specimens

Unlabelled and mislabeled specimens are not routinely processed in the Microbiology Laboratory. The ward is notified immediately by telephone; reason for rejection and the name of person accepting the telephone notification is documented electronically.

If the specimen is “irreplaceable”, e.g. CSF, OR specimen, the microbiologist or charge-technologist must speak to the doctor and/or nurse who collected the specimen or was present during the procedure. It is essential to obtain an accurate matching description of the specimen and container. The above person has to accept responsibility for the specimen. Record the information on the report – full name, position, time, and date. If problem cannot be resolved, keep the specimen in the problem basket for a week, send a final report the reason for rejection and attempts made to notify the ward and file an incident report internally.

CRITERIA	REPORT COMMENT	LIS QA Code
Unlabelled specimen with requisition or HIS order (for specimen that can be replaced)	"No specimen with this patient's name was received. Please repeat if necessary. Informed..... onward."	UNLB
Unlabelled specimen with requisition or HIS order (for specimen that cannot be replaced)	"No specimen with this patient's name was received. Test was performed on the unlabelled specimen. Informed..... onward."	UNLB
Unlabelled specimen without requisition or HIS order	If there is an incomplete name or initial on the specimen, enter into the LIS and result as "Specimen not labeled" and keep the specimen in the problem for 48hrs.	UNLB
Mislabeled specimen (for specimen that can be replaced)	"The specimen received with this order/requisition is labeled with another patient's name and has therefore not been processed. Informed onward."	MSLB
Mislabeled specimen (for specimen that cannot be replaced)	"The specimen received with this order/requisition is labeled with another patient's name. Test was performed on the mislabeled specimen. Informed onward" "The specimen received with this order/requisition is labeled as Informedon.....ward"	MSLB

SPECIMEN TYPE	TEST	REJECTION CRITERIA	REPORT COMMENT (LIS Result Code)	LIS QA Code
STOOL	C&S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not submitted in enteric pathogen transport media. Patient admitted for 72 hours or more. Multiple specimens collected from the same in-patient the same day (only one specimen per patient per test per day is to be processed). Stools from outpatients often arrive in batches and are usually a series taken from separate days. Process the most recent sample and reject the others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specimen not received in enteric transport medium. "This specimen was not cultured for community acquired enteric pathogens because the patient has been hospitalized for 3 or more days. Discuss with the Medical Microbiologist if necessary." "This specimen has not been processed as a specimen submitted from the same day has already been processed." "Multiple specimens received. Only the most recently collected specimen has been processed." 	WTPM >72H RPTS RPTS UNST

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All formed stools except when <i>S. typhi</i> requested. • Stool sample in Cary-Blair transport medium with yellow indicator indicating failure of the buffering system to maintain a neutral pH. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Formed stool received. Test cancelled.” • “This specimen was not processed as the transport medium failed to stabilize the specimen and maintain a neutral pH.” 	UNST
STOOL	O&P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not submitted in SAF container • Patients who have been admitted more than 72 hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Specimen not received in SAF (fixative for parasite)." • "This specimen was not processed for community acquired enteric pathogens because the patient has been hospitalized for 3 or more days. Discuss with the Medical Microbiologist if necessary." 	WTPM >72H
STOOL	<i>C. difficile</i> toxin	Submitted in enteric pathogen transport medium or SAF container.	"Specimen received in enteric pathogen transport medium. Unsuitable for <i>C. difficile</i> testing. Please repeat." OR "Specimen received in SAF (fixative for parasite). Unsuitable for <i>C. difficile</i> toxin testing. If you have any questions, please call the Microbiology Lab."	WTPM WTPM
	<i>C. difficile</i> toxin (cont'd)	Formed Stool	“Formed stool received. Test cancelled.”	
		Rectal Swab	“Rectal swab received; unsuitable for testing. Please resubmit a stool sample.”	
		Negative within 7 days	“This patient has tested negative for <i>C. difficile</i> toxin B gene within the past week. A single negative test is sufficient to rule out <i>C. difficile</i> . If you believe your patient	

		Positive within 15 days	<p>has developed diarrhea due to C.difficile since the previous negative result and would like repeat testing, please contact the Microbiologist-on-call.”</p> <p>“This patient has tested positive for C.difficile toxin B gene within the past 15 days. Do not repeat C.difficile toxin testing unless the patient has received a full course treatment (14 days) and has developed recurrent symptoms of C.difficile. Repeat C.difficile toxin testing is not indicated in patients who have clinically responded to treatment.”</p>	
Foley catheter tips and ETT tips (adult)	C&S	Unsuitable specimen	"Specimen unsuitable for culture... because of...add qualifier."	UNST
SPUTUM	C&S	> 25 squamous epithelial cells/lower power field except from PMH patients.	"Greater than 25 squamous epithelial cells per low power field."	

Urine	C&S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condom catheter • Foley catheter tips and bags • Leaking specimens • Inappropriate/swab/non-sterile container • >24 hr delay before specimen received (in Sterile Specimen Container) • >48 hr delay before specimen received (in Urine C&S Preservative tube. • Duplicate specimens (more than one processed urine within 24 hrs) • Insufficient quantity received in the Urine C&S Preservative tube. • Specimen received in the wrong tube. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Specimen unsuitable for culture.... because of....add qualifier." }UNST • "Specimen unsuitable for culture because the specimen appears to be a Foley catheter tip or bag." }CATH • "Specimen unsuitable for culture because the specimen is leaking." }LEAK • "Specimen unsuitable for culture because the specimen was received in a non sterile container. }NOST • "Specimen was received in the lab >24 hours after it has been collected; unsuitable for culture." }>24H • "Specimen was received in the lab >48 hours after it has been collected; unsuitable for culture." }>48hr • "This is a duplicate order. This test has been cancelled." }DUPL <p>"Insufficient quantity of urine received. Please fill grey top tube with urine to the indicated line. Suggest repeat specimen if clinically indicated." }INSG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Specimen received in wrong tube for C&S testing. Please submit urine in grey top tube that specifies "Urine C&S Preservative" and fill to the indicated line." }WRNG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNST • UNST • LEAK • UNST • DLAY • DLAY • RPTS • UNST • UNST
Dry Swabs	C&S	If received in the lab >1	"Specimen not received	WTPM

		hour after collection.	in transport medium and was in transit for > 1 hour." Spec}DRY	
Blood cultures, tissues, sterile body fluids	C&S	If received in the lab >48 hours after collection.	Process specimen. Enter Report Comment: "Specimen was received in the lab >48 hours after it has been collected; results should be interpreted accordingly." }>48H	DLAY
All specimens other than urine, blood cultures, tissues and sterile body fluids.	C&S	If received in the lab >48 hours after collection.	"Specimen was received in the lab >48 hours after it has been collected; unsuitable for culture." }>48hr	DLAY
All specimen types except : • Tissue • Sterile body fluid • Brain and liver abscess • Aspirated pus • Bone and soft tissue biopsies with diagnosis of gas gangrene, necrotizing fasciitis or necrotizing cellulitis	Anaerobic culture	Not submitted in special anaerobic transport media.	"No anaerobic swab received; anaerobic culture not done."	WTPM
BLOOD	CMV antigenemia Assay	-Not submitted in EDTA (purple top) or heparin (green top) tube -Clotted blood (inadequate mixing of anticoagulant after collection or red top tube) - Extremely low leukocyte counts or insufficient volume (generally <2 mL) - More than 3 samples from the same person in the same week, unless authorized	"CMV Antigenemia cannot be processed on red top tubes. Please collect blood in an EDTA (lavender top) tube." "Insufficient white blood cells to perform test." "This specimen was taken too soon after the previous one, therefore not processed for virology. Please refer to previous specimens."	WTBE WNST RPTS

		<p>TGH specimens collected during weekend and holidays, or received in the Virology lab from 4:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m. would not be fresh enough for processing</p> <p>Specimens from other facilities would be rejected if received in the Virology lab during weekend and holidays</p>	<p>“Specimen was collected before 12:00am, a fresh specimen is required. Please repeat.”</p> <p>“Test cancelled. Specimen was received on weekend when the Virology lab was closed. A fresh specimen is required for CMV antigenemia testing.”</p> <p>“Specimen was received after cut off time (4:00pm), unable to process. Please repeat.”</p>	<p>DLAY</p> <p>DLAY</p> <p>DLAY</p>
BLOOD	West Nile PCR test	<p>Not submitted in EDTA (purple Top) of ACD (acid citrate dextrose – yellow top) tube.</p> <p>Specimen taken > 18 hours</p>	Please collect blood in ACD or EDTA (lavender top) tube	WTBE
SERUM	West Nile IgG & IgM Serology	Not submitted in Red top or Gel Separator tube	Please collect blood in Red top or Gel Separator tube.	WTBE
All specimen types (unless otherwise authorized)	Virology: Shell Vial or Tube Culture Assay	-Specimens collected in SAF, Enteric, charcoal, Amies or other non-viral transport media.	“Specimen received in unsuitable transport media therefore not processed for Virology.”	WTPM

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