

VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH LABORATORY

195 Colchester Avenue P.O. Box 1125
Burlington, Vermont 05402-1125
(802) 863-7335 1-800-660-9997 (VT only)

Collection Instructions for *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* Culture

In order to comply with postal regulations, ensure the safety of laboratory personnel and others involved in the transport of specimens, and maintain the integrity of the samples, the State Laboratory will accept for testing only those specimens that are packaged according to the instructions below.

The kit should contain:

- JEMBEC agar plate
- CO₂ generating tablet
- Sterile Dacron swab
- Zip-loc bag
- Padded insulated mailing envelope
- Test requisition form (Micro. 220)
- Specimen Collection Instructions (Micro. 441)

Storage of plates:

1. Store plates in an inverted position (medium layer on top) in plastic sleeve at 2-8°C.
2. Do not use plates that have cracked medium that has pulled away from the sides of the plate or otherwise shows evidence of desiccation or stress.
3. Do not use any component of the system that exhibits signs of degrading prior to the expiration date.
4. CO₂ tablet **MUST NOT** be refrigerated.

Collection Instructions:

1. JEMBEC plates should be warmed to room temperature prior to inoculation.

2. Cervical

- a. Do not use lubricant during procedure.
- b. Wipe the cervix clean of vaginal secretion and mucus.
- c. Rotate a sterile Dacron swab, and obtain exudates from the endocervical glands.
- d. If no exudate is seen, insert a sterile Dacron swab into the endocervical canal, and rotate the swab.

3. Vaginal

- a. Insert a sterile Dacron swab into the vagina.
- b. Collect discharge or vaginal secretions from the mucosa high in the vaginal canal

NOTE: Vaginal specimens are not considered optimal for the diagnosis of gonorrhea in women and should be reserved only for the evaluation of preteen-aged girls suspected of having sexually transmitted diseases due to presumed sexual abuse.

4. Urethral

- a. Collect specimen 1 to 2 hours or more after patient has urinated.
- b. Female: stimulate discharge by gently massaging the urethra against the pubic symphysis through the vagina.
 - i. Collect the discharge with a sterile Dacron swab.
 - ii. If discharge cannot be obtained, wash external urethra with Betadine soap and rinse with water. Insert a urethrogenital swab 2 to 4 cm into the endourethra, gently rotate the swab, leave it in place for 1 to 2 seconds and withdraw it.

- c. Male: insert a thin urethrogenital swab 2 to 4 cm into the endourethra, gently rotate it, leave it in place for 1 to 2 seconds, and withdraw it.

5. Pharyngeal

- a. Depress tongue gently with tongue depressor.
- b. Extend sterile swab between the tonsillar pillars and behind the uvula. Avoid touching other surfaces of the mouth.
- c. Sweep the swab back and forth across the posterior pharynx, tonsillar areas, and any inflamed or ulcerated areas to obtain sample.

6. Rectal

- a. Pass the tip of a sterile swab approximately 2 cm beyond the anal sphincter.
- b. Carefully rotate the swab to sample the anal crypts, and withdraw it.

7. Conjunctivae

- a. Collect purulent material on a swab:
 - i. Roll sterile swab over the conjunctiva before topical medications are applied
 - ii. Culture both eyes with separate swabs.

8. A separate plate is required for each site sampled. Print patient's name on plate label.
9. Open plate and roll the swab across the surface of the plate in a "Z" figure to assure adequate exposure of the swab to the medium. Plates are cross-streaked for isolation when received by the laboratory.
10. Use forceps to carefully place the CO₂ tablet into the circular well on the JEMBEC plate. The CO₂ tablet should be placed in the plate no later than 15 minutes after inoculation. It is not necessary to moisten the CO₂ tablet.
11. Close the JEMBEC plate immediately making sure the lid fits tightly. Place the labeled JEMBEC plate in the zip-lock bag, expel the air, and seal tightly. Check to be sure no portion of the bag is left open. This is essential to maintain the CO₂ environment.

Transport to the Laboratory

1. Fill out the requisition form fully (MICRO 220). Include patient information, health care provider information (or laboratory information), date of collection, reason for test, specimen type and source. Please do not forget to check the appropriate test requested. Omitting any of the above information, may result in a delay in testing.
2. Place zip-lock bag containing the plate into the padded insulated mailing envelope along with the completed requisition.
3. Secure the envelope shut with staples and/or tape.
4. Submit specimens for culture to the laboratory as soon as possible at ambient temperature. The specimen should be received within 24 hours from the collection date.

THE LABORATORY WILL DECONTAMINATE AND DISCARD ANY SPECIMEN WHICH IS IMPROPERLY PACKAGED AND MAY PRESENT A RISK TO PERSONNEL.

The specimen may be rejected if:

- Sample information is missing on the specimen and form
- The specimen container is leaking or broken
- Specimens are greater than 24 hours
- CO₂ tablet missing