

WOUND SPECIMEN COLLECTION

Tissue or aspirate is superior to a swab specimen, as swabs hold only a small amount of specimen and are easily contaminated with adjacent normal flora or colonizing bacteria.

Note: Do not culture animal bite wounds less than or equal to 12 hours old (agents are usually not recovered) unless signs of infection are present.

Equipment

Aerobic Culture: Double culture swab or sterile container for fluid
Anaerobic Culture: Fluid: Port-A-Cul anaerobic vial
Swab: Port-A-Cul anaerobic tube and Dacron swab
Double culture swab (for Aerobic Culture/Gram Stain)

Closed abscess:

1. Decontaminate skin overlying abscess with disinfectant or 70% alcohol to prevent introduction of normal skin flora.
2. Aspirate abscess contents with a sterile needle and syringe.
3. Anaerobic culture:
 - a. Disinfect rubber stopper of Port-A-Cul anaerobic culture vial.
 - b. Express all the air from the syringe.
 - c. Inject fluid through rubber stopper into Port-A-Cul anaerobic culture vial.
Note: Aerobic culture may also be performed from the same specimen in this vial.
4. Aerobic culture:
 - a. Inject fluid into sterile container.
 - b. If a very small volume specimen, remove needle from syringe, stopper, and send syringe.

Open lesion or abscess:

1. Decontaminate skin adjacent to wound with disinfectant or 70% alcohol to remove colonizing bacteria not involved in the infectious process.
2. Aspirate if possible, or use double culture swabs to firmly sample the advancing margin deep in the interior of the lesion. Samples of the base of the lesion and abscess wall are most productive.
3. Aerobic culture:
 - a. Return swabs to the culture tube.
 - b. If Culturette brand of swab, crush ampule of medium, and push swab into the fluid.

4. Anaerobic culture:
 - a. Collect specimen on 3 swabs:
Bacterial double culture swab (for Aerobic Culture/gram stain)
Sterile Dacron swab (for Anaerobic Culture)
 - b. Return double culture swab to culture tube for Aerobic Culture/Gram Stain.
 - c. Insert the swab into the Port-A-Cul anaerobic culture tube to within 5 mm of the bottom of the medium. Break the shaft of the swab by bending it at right angles with the lip of the tube. Quickly replace cap on tube.

Note: Do not use Port-A-Cul anaerobic transport tubes which are pink or lavender more than 1/2 inch below the surface prior to inoculation.

Specimen Transport

Aerobic Culture and Anaerobic Culture: Transport at room temperature.

Optimum: within 2 hours

Acceptable: up to 24 hours in transport media.