

Provincial Laboratory Services



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One Island Health System

Acceptable specimens for fungal culture

June 18, 2018

This information applies to: Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Directors of Nursing, Nurse Managers, Clinical Instructors/Educators, Enterostomal Nurses, and Infection Control Practitioners

As of July 1, 2018, in order to stay consistent with best practices of our regional colleagues, C&S swabs of skin, wound, and ulcer sites will no longer be accepted for fungal culture. See below for specifics. C&S swabs are not optimal specimens for the isolation of pathogenic fungi due to the limited amount of specimen carried on swabs. In addition, yeast is readily identifiable through routine “bacterial” culture.

Acceptable specimens for fungal culture are:

- Skin scrapings, hair, and nail: collect either onto heavy black paper (fungus collection kit) or into a sterile (urine/sputum) container
- Eyes/ears: C&S swab
- Respiratory or sterile site (tissue, fluid) specimens: collect in a sterile container
- Urine specimens: collect in a sterile container
 - Urines will only be processed for fungal culture if a specific fungus is requested; otherwise, the urine will be processed for bacterial culture only with extended incubation.
- Wound/ulcer swabs:
 - Not recommended for fungus culture because these sites are often contaminated with environmental microorganisms.
 - These specimens will be processed as wound/ulcer bacterial cultures.
 - If a fungus is suspected, please consider collecting a tissue specimen.

REFERENCES:

Hazen, K. C., & Howell, S. A. (2016). Specimen selection, collection, and transport. In A. L. Leber (Ed.), *Clinical Microbiology Procedures Handbook* (4th ed., pp. 8.2.1-8.2.6). Washington, DC: ASM Press.

Hazen, K. C., & Howell, S. A. (2016). Processing specimens for fungal culture. In A. L. Leber (Ed.), *Clinical Microbiology Procedures Handbook* (4th ed., pp. 8.4.1-8.4.6). Washington, DC: ASM Press.

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