



Herpes Viruses

Collection Procedures

1. Acceptable Specimens

- Swabs from throat, skin lesions, genital tract and rectal lesions. Herpetic lesions from the eye and mouth are also acceptable.
- Eye scrapings or swab
- Tissue or biopsy specimen
- Body fluids
- Rectal swabs

Note: Rectal swab on any age patient is acceptable if a rash or lesion is present.

2. Unacceptable Specimens

- Feces
- Urine
- CSF – (Order PCR testing)

3. Specimen Collections

- All specimens should be collected from the patient by an appropriately trained individual. Ideally, specimens should be collected within 3-4 days of the onset of symptoms but no more than 7 days.
- Rayon or Dacron swabs are suggested. Calcium alginate swabs are not acceptable.
 - Throat swab: Use sterile swab for specimen collection. Carefully rub the posterior wall of the nasopharynx with the dry swab. The swab should not touch the tongue or mucosa. Place swab in universal transport media.
 - Skin lesions: Use sterile swab to collect specimen. Open the vesicle with a sterile needle and allow the material within the vesicle to be absorbed onto the swab. Place swab in universal transport media.
 - Genital swab: Use a sterile swab to collect the specimen. Rub the lesion firmly with the swab. Place swab in universal viral transport media. Refrigerate immediately.
 - Rectal swab: Use sterile swab for specimen collection. Insert the swab about one-half to one inch into the rectum. Place swab in universal transport media.
 - Body fluids for HSV: 1 mL of fluid in the universal transport media.
 - Tissue or biopsy specimens: Place in a sterile leak-proof container. Add 1 mL or more of universal transport media to container. Small pieces of tissue or biopsy specimen can be added directly to the universal transport tube.
 - Eye swab or scraping: Use a sterile swab for collection. If the specimen is a conjunctival specimen, the swab is rolled gently across the conjunctiva and

then placed in universal transport media. Refrigerate immediately. Conjunctival scrapings should be taken with a fine sterile spatula and transfer the scraping to universal transport media.

- Neonate or infant with blisters/lesions: Culture lesions. Place swab in universal transport media.

Note: Specimens should be stored and transported at 2 - 8° C (refrigerated). For OPTIMUM cultures, the specimen should be received in the laboratory within 24 hours of collection. We will accept specimens up to 48 hours after collection.