

Policy #:	606 (PLH-606-02)	Effective Date:	9/30/2004	Reviewed Date:	2/4/2011
Subject:	COLLECTION AND TRANSPORT OF OCULAR SPECIMENS FOR CULTURE				
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COLLECTION AND TRANSPORT OF OCULAR SPECIMENS FOR CULTURE

General Consideration

- Obtain viral and chlamydial samples before topical anesthetics are instilled.
- Obtain samples for chlamydial cultures with swabs from chlamydia collection kit and for viral cultures with Dacron swabs or cotton swabs with non-wood shafts. Send prepared smears and viral or chlamydia transport media to the laboratory immediately.

Conjunctival scrapings

1. One (1) or 2 drops of topical anesthetic are generally instilled.
2. Scrape the lower tarsal conjunctiva with a sterilized kimura spatula.
3. Inoculate the appropriate media directly.
4. Prepare smears by applying the scraping in a circular manner to a clean glass slide or by compressing material between two glass slides and pulling the slides apart.
5. Alternatively, use a calcium alginate or a cotton-tipped culturette to swab the inferior tarsal conjunctiva (inside surface of eyelid) and the fornix of the eye. However, organisms are more readily detected in scrapings than from a swab.

Corneal scrapings

1. Obtain conjunctival samples prior to corneal scrapings. Sometimes conjunctival cultures are helpful in assessing the possibility of contamination of corneal cultures.
2. One or 2 drops of topical anesthetic are generally instilled.
3. Using short, firm strokes in one direction scrape multiple areas of ulceration and suppuration with a sterilized kimura spatula. (Keep the eyelid open, and be careful not to touch the eyelashes.)
4. Inoculate each scraping directly to appropriate media. (Multiple scrapings are recommended because the depth and extent of viable organisms may vary.)
5. Prepare smears by applying the scrapings in a gentle circular motion over a clean glass slide or by compressing material between two clean glass slides and pulling slides apart.

Intraocular fluid

1. Use a needle aspiration technique to collect intraocular fluid.
2. Inoculate appropriate media directly, and/or immediately transport the samples to the laboratory in an anaerobic transport system or a capped syringe with air bubbles expelled.

Prepare smears by spreading a drop of material over the surface of a cleaned glass slide with a sterile kimura spatula or by compressing the material between two glass slides and pulling the slides apart. Do not use cotton swabs for specimens for viral cultures.