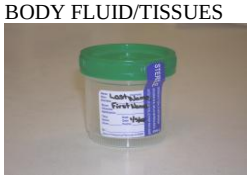
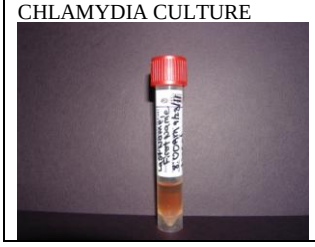
MICROBIOLOGY/CLINICAL LABORATORY SPECIMEN INTEGRITY REQUIREMENTS

The quality and clinical relevance of laboratory results clearly depend on the appropriate collection, storage and transport of clinical specimens submitted for testing. The following easy reference table is for **most common test requests**. It lists important specimen integrity requirements and additional guidelines for specimen management.

CONTAINER	COLLECTION	TEMP/TIME RT=Room Temperature	REPLICA LIMITS	COMMENTS
AFB	Sterile container; >2mL	4°/≤24HR	x3	Urine - First morning void. Sputum – 3 consecutive including 1 first morning.
ANAEROBE OR	Fluid/tissue in sterile container is optimal. BBL Culture Swab Plus with charcoal for surgical swabs if no other options (black cap w/red lettering)	RT/≤24HR	1/day per source	Unacceptable: throat, superficial sites, urine, vaginal, sputum, rectal..
BETA GRP B SCREEN	Aerobic transport swab (white cap w/blue lettering).	RT/≤24HR	1/day	CDC recommends GBS screen culture at 35 weeks, includes enhanced broth culture. Recto/vaginal specimen recommended
BLOOD	Blood culture bottles 5-10 mL/bottle Aerobic (blue)/Anaerobic (yellow)	35°/RT Transport to lab ASAP	At least 2 sets and no more than 3 sets per adult patient	Children require 1 aerobic culture bottle only. Inoculate with volume obtained. Anaerobic bottle not indicated.
BODY FLUID/TISSUES 	Specimens obtained by invasive procedure. Transport in sterile container	ASAP to lab, RT°	Not applicable	Swabs are not optimal for culture. Send fluid or tissue
C. difficile TOXIN ASSAY	Fresh stool in sterile container.	4°/≤24HR	1/day	Do not send in preservative. Formed stool is unacceptable
CHLAMYDIA CULTURE 	Inoculate UTM (Universal Transport Medium-red cap) with flocked swab	4°/24HR Transport cold	1/day	Please indicate specific source. Chlamydia culture must be requested for possible sexual abuse cases.

CONTAINER	COLLECTION	TEMP/TIME RT=Room Temperature	REPLICA LIMITS	COMMENTS
CHLAMYDIA TRACHOMATIS/NEISSERIA GONORRHOEAE AMPLIFIED PROBE	Acceptable sources are male urethral and female endocervical samples collected in The Gen-Probe Aptima unisex swab specimen transport tubes. BLUE collection swab must be left in the transport tube. Male and female urine specimens are acceptable. Collect 10-30 mL first portion of void in sterile container. Transfer 2 mL of urine into the Gen-probe Aptima Urine Specimen Transport Tube (Yellow).. Requeset culture for sources other than urogential urine and for possible sexual abuse.	2-30C /24hr.	1 per source	Aptima Combo 2 target amplification nucleic acid probe test for the detection of Chlamydia trachomatis and Neisseria gonorrhoeae.
FUNGUS OR	Sterile container (fungal scrapings; hair, nail et). Or swab (aerobic culturette – white cap) of specific size	RT/≤24HR	1/day same source	Contact lab for dermatophyte media if direct plating is requested.
GC CULTURE OR	Martin Lewis Media w/$C0_2$ tablet for direct plating; alternatively send aerobic transport swab for plating in lab.	35° or RT/24HR Swab RT°	1/day same source	Culture for Neisseria gonorrhoeae. Do not expose specimens to temperatures below 25C.
HEPATITIS C PCR RNA (Quantitative, Qualitative Genotype)	Plasma prep tube (PPT). Spin within 2 hours of collection.	Frozen	1/day	
HERPES	Inoculate UTM (Universal Transport Medium) red cap	4C/24HR Transport cold	1/day same source	
OVA & PARASITE (either container)	Fresh, dry, sterile container or Preserved – SAF (yellow top)	Fresh 4°24HR Preserved RT/indefinitely	x3 consecutive days	Routine O&P will detect Giardia & Cryptosporidia. Indicate travel history if complete parasite exam is requested.

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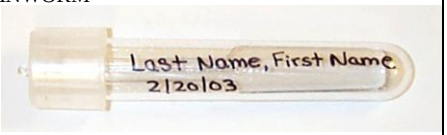
PINWORM 	Perianal sampling on a pinworm paddle.	RT/24HR	1/day	Collect specimen first thing in the morning before bathing or using the toilet.
RAPID INFLUENZA	NP or Nasal Wash into UTM (Universal Transport Medium) red cap	4°/24HR must keep cold	1/day	Tests for influenza A and B. Negatives will be cultured. Positives will be called
RAPID STREP OR	1 aerobic transport containing 2 swabs (red cap w/blue lettering) or 2 aerobic transport swabs (white cap w/blue lettering)	RT/≤24HR	1/day	All negatives will be confirmed by culture
ROTAVIRUS	Sterile container or rectal swab containing stool.	4°/24HR	1/day	
RSV Antigen Detection	NP or Nasal Wash into UTM (Universal Transport Medium) red cap	4°/24HR must keep cold	1/day	Rapid RSV performed on children < 14 yrs. old upon request only. All positive results will be called. Negatives will be cultured.
SEROLOGY	Serum gold top tube.	RT/24HR	1/day	Includes Mono, RPR, Rubella and viral antibodies.
SPUTUM	Sterile container >1ml.	4°/≤24HR	1/day	> 10 SECS indicates oral pharyngeal contamination.

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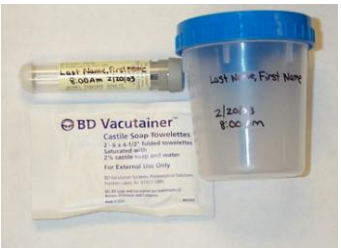
STOOL (either container) OR	Dry sterile container or stool transport: Carey Blair Media (green top); >2g ; INDICATE IF BLOODY OR LIQUID	Unpreserved 4°/24HR Preserved RT/96HR	1/day	Routine culture includes Salmonella, Shigella, Campylobacter and E. coli 0157:H7 If ruling out Vibrio or Yersinia, indicate on requisition.
THROAT THROAT Nasosophyngeal (if B. pertussis requested)	Aerobic transport swabs (White cap w/blue letters). Charcoal swab - blue cap (black transport media in swab)	RT/24HR	1/day	Culture for Beta Strep Grp A only. Office will be notified of all positives. PCR performed by ARUP Reference Laboratory. TAT 2 – 3 days. DFA not recommended
URINE 	BD Urine Collection Kit grey top w/ preservative tube. Alternatively send sterile container. *BD Urine Complete Collection Kit yellow top with preservative tube/red top with preservative	preserved RT/24HR unpreserved 4°/≤24HR *RT 48 /72 HR	1/day	If urinalysis is requested must send sterile cup along with preservative tube. *Shake vigorously/invert 8-10 times Yellow for culture/red for urinalysis
UROGENTIAL	Aerobic transport swab (white cap with blue lettering).	RT/24HR	1/day	Alternatively use wire tip aerobic culturette (orange cap w/blue lettering). Do not expose to temperatures below 25º C
VAGINITIS/VAGINOSIS SCREEN	Urogential swab in Amies Transport Media (pink cap).	4°/48HR	1/day	Tests for Trichomonas vaginalis, Gardnerella vaginalis, and Candida sp.
VIRUS	Collect with supplied flocked swab into UTM (Universal Transport Medium) red cap. This media may be used for viruses, Chlamydia, Mycoplasma, and Ureaplasma culture	4°/24HR must be transported cold	1/day per source	Please indicate request for specific virus. Rapid influenza A&B antigen detection test will be performed when indicated on requisition.
WOUND/ABSCESS	Aerobic transport swab (white w/blue letters) or sterile container.	RT/24HR	1/day per source	Indicate site of collection.

All collection supplies are available from Rochester General Hospital couriers at 922-4526. Questions should be directed to Client Services at 922-4451 or the Microbiology Department at 922-4555.