Pathologists' Laboratory, P.C.

Specimen Collection and Submission

Quick Reference Chart

Test Name	Methodology	Specimen Requirement	Container (type and fixative,media,etc)	Specimen Transport Temperature	Special Instructions,	Cross References (Aliases)	Lab Sector
CYTOLOGY, BODY CAVITY FLUID	Interpretative	Approximately 200 - 250 ml of fluid is optimal for cytologic study. Indicate the patient's name and one other unique identifier (DOB, MRN, or SS#), source of the specimen including right or left, if appropriate, and the date and time of collection on the specimen container. Secure lid and place specimen in a biohazard bag. Send the specimen with completed request form to the laboratory immediately or refrigerate until delivery.	Sterile specimen container with equal volume of cytology fixative.	Refridgerate		Body fluid, Pleural fluid, Peritoneal fluid, Abdominal fluid, Ascites fluid, Synovial fluid, Pelvic Washing, Pericardial fluid, Thoracentesis fluid, Paracentesis fluid	CYTO
CYTOLOGY, BREAST CYST ASPIRATION	Interpretative	Label frosted end of glass slides with patient's name and specimen source/site. Label specimen container with patient's name and one other unique identifier (DOB, MRN, or SS#). Aspirate breast fluid. Smear several drops on the glass slides. "Immediately" spray half the prepared slides with cytology fixative or place slides in 95% alcohol. If slides are placed in 95% alcohol, secure the lid to prevent leakage. Allow all spray fixed slides and the other half of the slides to completely dry before transporting to the laboratory. Empty remaining fluid into the specimen container with cytology fixative. Secure the lid and place the specimen and a completed request form in a bioharzard bag for transport to the laboratory.	Sterile specimen container and glass slides in plastic slide holders.	Refridgerate		Breast fluid	CYTO
CYTOLOGY, BRONCHIAL BRUSHING	Interpretative	Label frosted end of glass slides with patient's name and specimen source/site with a lead pencil. Label specimen container with patient's name and one other unique identifier (DOB, MRN, or SS#). After collection of the specimen, roll brush over slide. Fix slides immediately with 95% alcohol. Agitate the brush in the container of cytology fixative to dislodge additional material. Cut off lower portion of disposable brush and include in the specimen container. Secure lid tightly. Identify site of brushing and indicate the date of collection on the specimen container. Place specimen, slides and completed request in a biohazard bag.Transport to the laboratory as soon as possible. NOTE: Specimens for Microbiology should be collected seperately.	Sterile specimen container with cytology fixative and glass slides in plastic slide holders.	Refridgerate			CYTO
CYTOLOGY, BRONCHIAL WASHING	Interpretative	Label specimen container with patient's name and one other unique identifier (DOB, MRN, or SS#) along with the specimen site. After collection of specimen, pour material into specimen container. Fix material with an equal volume of cytology fixative and secure the lid. Send the specimen in a biohazard bag along with a completed request form to the laboratory as soon as possible. NOTE: Specimens for Microbiology should be collected seperately.	Sterile specimen container	Refridgerate		Bronchoalveolar Lavage, BAL	CYTO
CYTOLOGY, CEREBROSPINAL FLUID	Interpretative	A minimum of 1 ml should be submitted in a sterile tightly capped container. Label specimen container with patient's name and one other unique identifier (DOB, MRN, or SS#). If the specimen is cloudy or bloody, 3 units of heparin per ml of fluid may be added. Fix fluid with an equal volume of 95% ethyl alcohol or cytology fixative. Send the specimen along with a completed request form to the laboratory as soon as possible. Note: If other studies are requested the specimen for cytology should be collected in a separate container.	Sterile specimen container	Refridgerate		CSF, Lumbar Puncture	CYTO
CYTOLOGY, FINE NEEDLE ASPIRATION BIOPSY (FNA)	Interpretative	Label frosted end of glass slides with patient's name and specimen source/site with a lead pencil. Label specimen container with patient's name and one other unique identifier (DOB, MRN, or SS#). Aspirate fluid. Smear several drops on the glass slides. Immediately spray half the prepared slides with cytology fixative or place slides in 95% alcohol. Allow the other half of the slides to air dry. Empty remaining material into specimen container with added cytology fixative and rinse needle. If slides are placed in 95% alcohol, tightly cap the container to prevent leakage. If spray fixative is used, allow all slides to completely dry before transporting. Place the specimen, slides and a completed request form in a biohazard bag for transport to the laboratory.	Plastic Glass slide holder and Sterile Specimen container with added Cytology Fixative	Refrigerate	Smears should be prepared from the aspirate immediately before the specimen clots.	FNA, Needle biopsy, Thin Needle biopsy	CYTO

Test Name	Methodology	Specimen Requirement	Container (type and fixative,media,etc)	Specimen Transport Temperature	Special Instructions,	Cross References (Aliases)	Lab Sector
CYTOLOGY, GASTROINTESTINAL TRACT BRUSHING	Interpretative	Label frosted end of glass slides with patient's name and specimen source/site with a lead pencil. Label specimen container with patient's name and one other unique identifier (DOB, MRN, or SS#). After collection of the specimen, roll brush over slide. Fix slides immediately with 95% alcohol. Agitate the brush in the container of cytology fixative to dislodge additional material. Cut off lower portion of disposable brush and include in the specimen container. Secure lid. Identify site of brushing and indicate the date of collection on the specimen container. Place specimen, slides and completed request in a biohazard bag.Transport to the laboratory as soon as possible. NOTE: Specimens for Microbiology should be collected seperately.	Sterile specimen container with cytology fixative and glass slides in plastic slide holders.	Refridgerate		GI brushing, Common Bile Duct brushing, CBD brushing, Esophageal brushing	CYTO
CYTOLOGY, GASTROINTESTINAL TRACT WASHING	Interpretative	Label specimen container with patient's name and one other unique identifier (DOB, MRN, or SS#) along with the specimen site. After collection of specimen, pour material into specimen container. Fix material with an equal volume of cytology fixative. Secure lid and send the specimen in a biohazard bag along with a completed request form to the laboratory as soon as possible. NOTE: Specimens for Microbiology should be collected seperately.	Sterile specimen container	Refridgerate		Gastric washing, Esophageal washing	CYTO
CYTOLOGY, NIPPLE SECRETIONS	Interpretative	Label frosted end of glass slides with patient's name and specimen source/site with a lead pencil. Express fluid directly from nipple and smear on the glass slides. Immediately spray slide with cytology fixative or place slide in 95% alcohol. If slides are sprayed with cytology fixative, allow slides to completely dry before transporting. Complete a request form and submit with specimen. Place specimen in a biohazard bag and transport to the laboratory.	Plastic Glass Slide holder	Ambient		Nipple smear, Breast smear, Breast discharge	CYTO
CYTOLOGY, PAP TEST, CONVENTIONAL SMEAR	Interpretative; Includes cervical, endocervical, and vaginal sources.	Label frosted end of glass slides with patient's name and specimen source/site with a lead pencil. Obtain an adequate sample from the ectocervix using a cervical spatula. Obtain an adequate sampling from the endocervix by inserting a cervical brush into the cervix until only the bottommost fibers are exposed. Slowly rotate one-quarter to one half turn in one direction. Taking care to keep material moist, smear the specimen on the slide. "Immediately" spray slide with cytology fixative or place slide in 95% alcohol. If slides are sprayed with cytology fixative, allow slides to dry completely before packaging. If slides are placed in 95% alcohol, tightly cap the container to prevent leakage. Place the specimen and requisition in a biohazard bag for transport to the laboratory.	Plastic Slide holder	Ambient	Optimal time for collection of gyn specimens is 2 weeks after patient's LMP. Patients should be instructed not to use vaginal medications, spermicides, or douches 48 hours prior to collection and refrain from intercourse 24 hours prior to collection.	Pap Smear	CYTO
CYTOLOGY, PAP TEST, THIN PREP	Interpretative; Includes cervical, endocervical, and vaginal sources. Additional testing, including HPV, GC, Chlamydia and HSV available.	Endocervical Brush/Spatula Technique Obtain an adequate sample from the ectocervix using a plastic spatula. Rinse the spatula into the PreservCyt vial. Discard the spatula. Obtain an adequate sampling from the endocervix using an endocervical brush. Insert the brush into the cervix until only the bottommost fibers are exposed. Slowly rotate in one direction. Rinse the brush in the vial by rotating the device while pushing against the vial wall. Discard the brush. Tighten the cap so that the torque line on the cap passes the torque line on the vial. Record the patient's name on the vial. Record the patient information and medical history on the cytology requisition form. Place the vial and requisition in a biohazard bag for transport to the laboratory. Broom-like Device Technique: Insert the central bristles of the broom into the endocervical canal deep enough to allow the shorter bristles to fully contact the ectocervix. Push gently and rotate the broom clockwise. Rinse the broom in the vial by pushing the broom into the bottom of the vial forcing the bristles apart. As a final step, swirl the broom to futher release the material. Discard the broom. Follow the above instructions for submission to the laboratory.	ThinPrep Vial	Ambient	Optimal time for collection of gyn specimens is 2 weeks after patient's LMP. Patients should be instructed not to use vaginal medications, spermicides, or douches 48 hours prior to collection and refrain from intercourse 24 hours prior to collection.	Pap Smear	CYTO
CYTOLOGY, SPUTUM	Interpretative	Submit early morning "deep cough" specimen prior to any food ingestion. Specimen should be collected in a sterile, tightly capped container labeled with the patient's name and one other unique identifier (DOB, MRN, or SS#). Fix with at least 10ml cytology fixative. If specimen is greater than 10ml, mix with an equal volume of fixative. Send the specimen in a biohazard bag with a completed request to the laboratory as soon as possible. NOTE: Specimens for Microbiology should be collected seperately.	Sterile specimen container	Refridgerate	Specimen must be from a "deep cough" to be of diagnostic value.		CYTO

Test Name	Methodology	Specimen Requirement	Container (type and fixative,media,etc)	Specimen Transport Temperature	Special Instructions,	Cross References (Aliases)	Lab Sector
CYTOLOGY, URINE	Interpretative	Collect specimen in a sterile container that can be tightly capped. Label specimen container with patient's name and one other unique identifier (DOB, MRN, or SS#). Submit approximately 50 - 100 ml. Fix fluid with an equal volume of cytology fixative. Send the specimen along with a completed request form to the laboratory as soon as possible.	Sterile specimen container	Refridgerate	Specimens may be obtained by “clean catch” or by catheterization. The first morning void is optimal for "clean catch" specimens. Collection method must be noted on the requisition. Note: 24 hour urines are not acceptable for cytologic evaluation.		CYTO
CYTOLOGY, VIRAL SMEARS FOR HERPES (FORMERLY CALLED TZANK SMEARS	Interpretative	Label frosted end of glass slides with patient's name and specimen source/site with a lead pencil. Scrape ulceration with a curette.Smear material on alcohol-moistened slide. Immediately spray slide with cytology fixative or place slide in 95% alcohol. If slides are sprayed with cytology fixative, allow slides to completely dry before transport. Complete a request form and submit with specimen. Place specimen in a biohazard bag and transport to the laboratory.	Plastic Glass Slide holder	Ambient		Tzank smear	CYTO
TISSUE, BIOPSY	Interpretative	Label specimen container with patient's name and one other unique identifier (DOB, MRN, or SS#) along with the specimen site and date and time of collection. After obtaining tissue, place specimen immediately in a the container of 10% formalin.The volume of formalin should at minimum be 2:1, but ideally 20:1. NOTE: For specimens that are to be tested for HER2 protein over-expression and ER/PR expression by immunohistochemistry the volume of formalin should be at least 10:1. Secure lid and place container in a biohazard bag along with a completed request form for transport to the laboratory.	Sterile specimen container	Refridgerate			HISTO
TISSUE, MUSCLE	Reported by Vanderbilt University Neuropathology	Label specimen container with patient's name and one other unique identifier (DOB, MRN, or SS#) along with the specimen site and date and time of collection. After obtaining tissue, place specimen immediately in saline moistened (not soaked) gauze, then place gauze inside the labeled container. Secure lid and place container in a biohazard bag along with a completed request form. Send to the laboratory immediately.	Sterile specimen container	Refridgerate			HISTO
TISSUE, NERVE	Reported by Vanderbilt University Neuropathology	Label specimen container with patient's name and one other unique identifier (DOB, MRN, or SS#) along with the specimen site and date and time of collection. After obtaining tissue, lay the nerve out straight on a wooden tongue depressor or other similar item. There is no need to attach the nerve since a fresh nerve will stick to the wood. Place in a container of 4% glutaraldehyde. Secure lid and place container in a biohazard bag with completed request form.Send to the laboratory immediately. (NOTE: if 4% glutaraldehyde is not available 2% is acceptable. If neither is available, the nerve should be placed in a saline-moistened 4x4 gauze pad. Then place specimen in an appropriately labeled container. Secure lid and put container in a biohazard bag. Place bag on a bed of regular ice. Send to the laboratory immediately).	Sterile specimen container	Refridgerate			HISTO
TISSUE, PRODUCTS OF CONCEPTION FOR CHORIONIC VILLI		Label specimen container with patient's name and one other unique identifier (DOB, MRN, or SS#) along with the specimen site and date and time of collection. Clean immediate area with Betadine and remove any residue. Obtain 10-20 mg of villi in sterile transport medium (provided by the laboratory). Secure lid and place container in a biohazard bag along with a completed request form. Send to the laboratory immediately.	Sterile specimen container	Refridgerate		POC with Chromosomal Studies	HISTO
TISSUE, RESECTION	Interpretative	Label specimen container with patient's name and one other unique identifier (DOB, MRN, or SS#) along with the specimen site and date and time of collection. After obtaining tissue, place specimen immediately in a container of 10% formalin.The volume of formalin should at minimum be 2:1, but ideally 20:1. NOTE: For specimens that are to be tested for HER2 protein over-expression and ER/PR expression by immunohistochemistry the volume of formalin should be at least 10:1. Secure lid and place container in a biohazard bag along with a completed request form for transport to the laboratory.	Sterile specimen container	Refridgerate			HISTO

*The preferred cytology fixative for clear fluids (i.e. urine, CSF) for our laboratory is CytoLyt Solution. CytoLyt Solution is used as a cell wash/transport buffer for in-vitro diagnostic use. It contains methyl alcohol and buffered saline. Note: While ethyl alcohol is the preferred cytology fixative, isopropyl or methy alcohol may be substituted for cytology specimens. In general, the following are quivalent: 80% isopropyl = 95% ethyl = 100% methyl.

**All cytology fixatives and tissue fixatives are available from our laboratory.

For further assistance please call (615) 885-0746.