



## New ESwab And Microbiology Specimen Storage

Pathlab is pleased to introduce the new liquid based ESwab collection and transport system. The ESwab features a flocked swab that collects more sample and then when placed into the transport tube, releases it into the modified Amies transport fluid. This system maintains viability of aerobic, anaerobic and fastidious bacteria for up to 48 hours, (gonorrhoea up to 24 hours), at room and refrigerator temperatures.

What does this mean for you?

1. The pink ESwab (480CE) will replace the current blue Amies transport swab (108C). **(Please ensure you use up all of the existing blue swabs before changing over to the pink ESwab).**
2. As the ESwab contains a liquid transport media the collection tube must remain in an upright position while the lid is removed.
3. Collection procedure:
  - Collect the patient sample using the swab. Avoid touching the swab applicator below the pink moulded breakpoint as this could lead to contamination and incorrect test results.
  - Remove the screw cap from the tube and insert the swab all the way to the bottom of the tube.
  - Holding the swab shaft close to the rim of the tube, and keeping the tube away from your face, **break the applicator shaft at the pink breakpoint indication line.**
  - **Screw the cap on tightly to prevent leakage.**
  - Dispose of the swab shaft in a biohazard waste receptacle.
  - **Write** patient information on the tube label. (Do not apply a sticker that overhangs the bottom of the tube or as a "flag".)



CLINICAL UPDATE

# Microbiology Specimen Storage Prior To Transport

Care with pre-analytical specimen management is critical to optimise accuracy, analysis and interpretation of laboratory results.

Currently Pathlab recommends that all swabs, fluids and sputa should be stored at ambient room temperature. The IDSA Guidelines "A Guide to Utilisation of the Microbiology Laboratory for Diagnosis of Infectious Diseases", recommends refrigeration for most Microbiology specimens if they are not transported to the laboratory within 2 hours. Pathlab is modelling their protocols on these guidelines and would like to inform you of this change to our current recommended procedures.

Specimens that should ideally be stored at refrigerator temperature until transport to the laboratory are as follows:

- All swabs, except vaginal swabs (though the new ESwabs can be kept at room temperature if refrigeration is not possible)
- Urine
- Faeces
- Body fluids / aspirates
- Sputa
- FNA / Tissue samples

There are some exceptions and these specimens should be stored at ambient room temperature:

- Blood Cultures
- Vaginal swabs
- Chlamydia / Gonorrhoea NAAT tube
- Mycology skin scraping

It is best practise to store in the fridge but in some instances, where there is no available specimen fridge, room temperature storage is acceptable, providing samples are collected and transported to the laboratory within 24 to 48 hours. The exception is urine specimens that MUST be refrigerated if they are not in the laboratory within 2 hours of collection.

**Murray Robinson**  
**Charge Scientist Microbiology**  
**Pathlab Bay of Plenty**  
**(07) 577 4514**

**Jan Bird**  
**Charge Scientist Microbiology**  
**Pathlab Waikato**  
**(07) 858 0795**

#### References:

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