



Collection and storage of specimens

LCC IPC Guidance

Review October 2023

infectionprevention@lancashire.gov.uk



Collecting a urine sample

Essential equipment

- Sterile specimen container
- Non-sterile gloves
- Apron
- Documentation forms

Procedure

- Discuss the need and indication for the procedure with the client and obtain consent.
- Ensure a suitable, private location to maintain privacy and dignity.
- Decontaminate hands.
- Put on an apron and gloves as per PPE guidance.
- Clean the genital area to minimise contamination of specimen with other organisms.
- Ask the client to begin voiding first stream of urine into a urinal, toilet or bedpan.
- Place the wide-necked sterile container into the urine stream without interrupting the flow.
- Ask the client to void the remaining urine into the urinal, toilet or bedpan.
- Transfer the specimen into a sterile universal container.
- Dispose of waste, remove PPE.
- Decontaminate hands.
- Label sample and complete the request form with client details.
- Dispatch sample, or store appropriately.



Collecting a stool sample

Essential equipment

- Clean bedpan or receiver
- Sterile specimen container with integrated spoon
- Non-sterile gloves
- Apron
- Documentation forms

Procedure

- Discuss the need and indication for the procedure with the client and obtain consent.
- Ensure a suitable, private location to maintain privacy and dignity.
- Decontaminate hands.
- Put on an apron and gloves as per PPE guidance.
- Ask client to defecate into a clinically clean bedpan or receiver.
- If the client has been incontinent a sample may be obtained from bedlinen or pads, try to avoid contamination with urine.
- Using the integrated spoons, scoop enough faeces to fill a third of the specimen container.
- Apply specimen container lid securely.
- Dispose of waste, remove PPE.
- Decontaminate hands.
- Observe the specimen for features such as colour, consistency and odour and record in care plans/notes.
- Label sample and complete the request form with client details.
- Dispatch sample, or store appropriately.



Collecting a sputum sample

Essential equipment

- Specimen pot
- Tissues

Procedure

- Ensure a suitable, private location to maintain privacy and dignity.
- Ensure client is sitting up comfortably.
- Decontaminate hands.
- Put on an apron and gloves as per PPE guidance.
- Ask client to rinse his/her mouth with water to reduce specimen contamination by bacteria or food particles (avoid mouthwash or toothpaste).
- For a client with dentures, remove the dentures first.
- Ask client to hold his/her breath a few seconds - then cough directly into the specimen container.
- Seal sample pot.
- Assist client with oral hygiene, offer water, wipe face etc.
- Dispose of waste, remove PPE.
- Decontaminate hands.
- Label sample and complete the request form with client details.
- Dispatch sample, or store appropriately.



Storage of Specimens

Send specimens to the laboratory immediately in order to prevent overgrowth of non-pathogens and the death of pathogenic organisms.

IF UNABLE TO SEND IMMEDIATELY PLEASE FOLLOW THE BELOW ADVICE

- Place the specimen into the sealable pocket of the plastic bag and close the pocket.
- Refrigerate (at 4°) specimens which cannot be transported immediately.
- Any fridge that is used for the storage of specimens **MUST NOT** be used for the storage of any food items or drugs, including vaccines.
- The fridge should have a minimum / maximum thermometer and be regularly cleaned and serviced as directed in the cleaning schedule.
- Sputum should be sent to the laboratory as soon as possible on the daily specimen pick up. Respiratory pathogens will not survive for prolonged periods.
- Do not leave specimens, including sputum, over the weekend or bank holidays.

