

MEMORANDUM

October 21, 2025

TO: OSUWMC, The James and East Hospital Medical staff; University Reference
Laboratory Clients

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RE: **Updated Requirements for Microbiology Specimen Collection**

To enhance overall culture sensitivity and diagnostic accuracy, the Microbiology Laboratory has updated specimen collection requirements, **effective October 21**. These changes are based on recent quality reviews showing that inadequate specimen volume and inappropriate collection devices can reduce pathogen recovery, delay diagnosis, and affect patient management. The updated guidelines below are intended to standardize specimen submission across all sites and ensure optimal results for all microbiology cultures.

Specimen Requirements for Aerobic, Anaerobic, and Fungal Culture

Culture Type	Specimen Type	Minimum Requirement	Special Notes
Aerobic, Anaerobic, and/or Fungal Culture	Tissue/Bone	≥ 5 mm	For deep tissue infection, core needle biopsy is preferred over FNA
	Body Fluid	≥ 1 mL	Collect in sterile container . Do not send in ESwab
	ESwab	<p>✓ Acceptable for superficial wound or mucosal site sampling</p> <p>✗ Body fluids not accepted</p>	Body fluids submitted in ESwabs will be rejected due to specimen dilution and concerns regarding organism viability
Urine Culture	Urine	Fill to line on gray-top tube (≥3 mL)	Ensure proper collection to avoid contamination

Additional Collection Notes

- **Separate specimen submission is required for AFB Culture** due to distinct handling and decontamination protocols. **Please refer to the separate memo on AFB specimen requirements for additional details.**
- **Fine Needle Aspirations (FNA)** may provide limited material for culture. When infection is strongly suspected, **core needle biopsy or excised tissue ($\geq 5-10$ mm)** is preferred to ensure adequate sample volume.
- **Bone Samples:** Larger fragments (≥ 5 mm, preferably multiple pieces) increase diagnostic yield and pathogen recovery.

For questions or operational concerns, please contact the clinical microbiology lab at 614-257-3918

Thank you for your attention and commitment to high-quality specimen collection.