

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 support the upcoming transition of Acid-Fast Bacilli (AFB) culture testing back in-house on 10/21/25, and to enhance AFB culture sensitivity and diagnostic accuracy, the Microbiology Laboratory has updated specimen collection requirements. These changes are based on recent quality reviews showing that inadequate specimen volume and inappropriate collection reduces AFB recovery, impacting diagnosis, and affecting patient care. The updated guidelines below are intended to standardize specimen submission across all sites and ensure optimal results for all microbiology cultures.

Specimen Requirements for Acid-Fast Culture

| Specimen Type | Minimum Requirement | Special Notes |
|---------------|-----------------------|--|
| Tissue/Bone | ≥ 5 mm | Must be submitted as a separate specimen ; cannot be shared with other culture orders |
| Body Fluid | ≥ 1 mL | Use a sterile container only. Do not send in ESwab |
| ESwab | ✗ Not accepted | |

Additional Important Collection Notes

- **Separate specimen submission is required for AFB Culture** due to distinct handling and decontamination protocols

- **Fine Needle Aspirations (FNA)** provide limited specimen for culture. When AFB infection is suspected, **core needle biopsy or excised tissue ($\geq 5\text{mm}$)** should be collected to ensure adequate specimen volume.
- **Bone Samples:** Larger fragments needed (≥ 5 mm, preferably multiple pieces) to increase diagnostic yield and AFB 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.