**BLOOD CULTURE SPECIMEN REQUIREMENTS**

1. **TIMING RECOMMENDATIONS**

Timing and numbers of cultures collected- The following recommendations are intended to maximize the chances of recovering organisms from the blood, and to assure proper test utilization.

Recommended draws:

Acute Sepsis – 2 to 3 sets from separate sites, all within 10 minutes.

Acute Endocarditis – 3 sets from 3 sites at least 1 hour apart.

Subacute Endocarditis – 3 sets from 3 sites taken > 15 minutes to 1 hour apart. If negative at 24 hours obtain 3 more sets.

Fever of unkown origin – 2 to 3 sets from separate sites 15 minutes to 1 hour apart depending on the urgency to start antimicrobial therapy. If negative at 24 hours, obtain 2 to 3 more sets.

Suspected colonized central line – 1 set peripherally drawn and 1 set drawn through central line.

Suspected Mycobacterium (TB) septicemia – patient permitting, two-three separate blood cultures should be drawn at no less than hourly intervals over a 24-hour period. Culture should be ordered as Culture Acid Fast Bacilli.

Suspected Fungus septicemia- patient permitting, three separate specimens should be drawn on three consecutive days when no other orders supersede. The ordering physician may order any frequency in an effort to enhance recovery of the suspected organisms. The cultures should be separated by at least fifteen minutes, preferably 30 minutes or more, between venipucture events. Culture should be ordered as a Culture Fungal Blood.

**In all instances follow the ordering physician’s specified draw times.**

**If physician does not specify draw times then draw from different sites a minimum of 15 minutes apart.**

1. **BLOOD CULTURE BOTTLE INFORMATION**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Purpose** | **Color top** | **Minimum blood Volume** | **Maximum blood Volume** |
| SA | Aerobic organisms | Blue cap | 5 ml | 10 ml |
| SN | Anaerobic organisms | Purple cap | 5 ml | 10 ml |
| PF | Pediatric-Aerobic organisms for pediatric patients & when unable to obtain at least 5 ml from adult | Yellow cap | 1 ml | 4 ml |

**Store bottle at room temperature and PROTECT FROM LIGHT.**

**Check expiration date on bottle prior to drawing.**

**Note: DO NOT OVERFILL BOTTLES – PLACE NO MORE THAN THE MAXIMUM BLOOD VOLUME IN EACH BOTTLE PER THE CHART ABOVE**

1. **VOLUME to DRAW**

**Volume of Blood Needed for routine Blood Culture: Aim for Optimum amount listed in table.**

Obtaining an adequate volume of blood for each blood culture is critical in detecting bacteria in the blood since they may be present in small numbers that are circulating throughout the body. Every effort should be made to obtain the **optimum amount of blood** based on patient weight so that enough bacteria will be in the bottle, enabling it to grow and be detected. See table below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **BLOOD CULTURE VOLUMES by Patient Weight** | **Blood Volume To Be Drawn** | **Blood Culture Bottle(s)** |
| Less than 8.8 lbs | 1 ml | All in PF Bottle |
| 8.8 – 28.6 lbs | 3 ml | All in PF Bottle |
| 28.6 – 55 lbs | **Optimum: 10 ml** | **SA bottle (5 ml)**  **SN bottle (5 ml)** |
| 5-9ml | All in SA bottle |
| 1-4 ml | All in PF Bottle |
| Greater than 55 lbs | **Optimum: 20 ml** | **SA bottle (10ml max)**  **SN (10ml max)** |
| 10-19 ml | SA bottle (5-10ml)  SN (5-9ml) |
| 5-9ml | All in SA bottle |
| 1-4ml | All in PF bottle |