PROGRAM Standard Operating Procedure – Laboratory Services	
Title: MIC90200 – STH Laboratory-Microbiology Department Specimen Collection and Turnaround Time	Policy Number:
Program Name: Laboratory Services	
Applicable Domain: Lab, DI and Pharmacy Services	
Additional Domain(s):	
Effective Date:	Next Review Date:
Issuing Authority: Director of Health Services	Date Approved:
Accreditation Canada Applicable Standard:	

GUIDING PRINCIPLE:

1. Turnaround times are defined as the time the specimen is received in the Microbiology Laboratory to the time the final result is reported
2. Specimens are set up throughout the day; however, due to time needed for incubation, routine specimens received in the Microbiology Laboratory after 16:00 may not be processed until the following day
3. All STAT gram stains will be read without exception. This includes: positive blood cultures, CSF's, fluids or any gram indicated as STAT by the physician. During regular Microbiology Laboratory hours, turnaround time for these gram stains is <1 hour. Outside the regular Microbiology Laboratory hours, a Microbiology Technologist may be called in if ordering physician determines the stain must be read immediately
   NOTE: Failure to adhere to these turnaround times is unacceptable and will be investigated accordingly

PURPOSE/RATIONALE:

The following are guidelines for the collection of specimens for culture and sensitivity (C&S) including specimen type, collection container, storage temperature and expected Turnaround Time (TAT).

SCOPE/APPLICABILITY:

This procedure applies to Medical Laboratory Technologists (MLTs) processing specimens for microbiology testing**.**

Specimen Type	Container and Storage Temperature	Preliminary Results	Final Negative	Final Positive	Notes
BV Screen	Sterile swab in C&S transport medium Specimen holding temperature: Room temperature	N/A	24 to 48 hours	24 to 48 hours	Only performed on patient's ≥13 years of age If patient is <13 years of age, processed as genital culture Refer to MIC10110-Bacterial Vaginosis Job Aid
Blood Culture	BACTEC blood culture bottle Specimen holding temperature: Room temperature, do not cool, freeze or incubate	Gram stain: positive phoned immediately during regular hours Culture: 24 hours	5 days	48 to 72 hours	2 sets of blood cultures are recommended Each set should be drawn from a separate site
Body Fluid Culture	Sterile container Specimen holding temperature: Room temperature	Gram stain: ≤1 hour during regular hours Culture: 24 hours	5 days	48 to 72 hours	N/A
	BACTEC blood culture bottle Specimen holding temperature: Room temperature	Gram stain: positive phoned immediately during regular hours Culture: 48 hours	5 days	48 to 72 hours	N/A
C.difficile Screen	Sterile container Specimen holding temperature: Refrigerated	N/A	24 hours	24 hours	Sample can be stored refrigerated for up to 5 days. If transport time is more than 5 days, freeze specimen

Specimen Type	Container and Storage Temperature	Preliminary Results	Final Negative	Final Positive	Notes
CSF Culture	Sterile screw top tubes Specimen holding temperature: Room temperature	Gram stain: ≤1 hour during regular hours Culture: 24 hours	72 hours	48 to 72 hours	If multiple tubes of CSF are collected, the first tube should not be used for microbiological examination
Ear Culture	Sterile swab in C&S transport medium Specimen holding temperature: Room temperature	Gram stain: 24 hours Culture: 24 hours	48 hours	48 to 72 hours	N/A
Eye Culture (superficial)	Sterile swab in C&S transport medium Specimen holding temperature: Room temperature	Gram stain: 24 hours Culture: 24 hours	48 hours	48 to 72 hours	N/A
Eye Culture (deep)	Smear and inoculated culture media or sterile swab in C&S transport medium Specimen holding temperature: Room temperature	Gram stain: ≤1 hour during regular hours Culture: 24 hours	5 days	48 to 72 hours	N/A
Genital Culture (Lower)	Sterile swab in C&S transport medium (charcoal swab preferred) Specimen holding temperature: Room temperature	Gram stain: 24 hours Culture: 24 hours	72 hours	72 to 96 hours	N/A

Specimen Type	Container and Storage Temperature	Preliminary Results	Final Negative	Final Positive	Notes
Genital Culture (Upper)	Sterile swab in C&S transport medium Specimen holding temperature: Room temperature	Gram stain: 24 hours Culture: 24 hours	5 days	72 to 96 hours	N/A
Gonorrhoeae Culture	Sterile swab in C&S transport medium (charcoal swab preferred) Specimen holding temperature: Room temperature	N/A	72 hours	72 to 96 hours	Specimen examined for *N.gonorrhoeae* only
Group B Screen	Sterile swab in C&S transport medium Specimen holding temperature: Room temperature	N/A	72 hours	72 to 96 hours	N/A
IUD Culture	Sterile container Specimen holding temperature: Refrigerated	N/A	10 days	72 to 96 hours	N/A
MRSA Screen	Sterile swab in C&S transport medium Specimen holding temperature: Room temperature	N/A	24 hours	24 hours	N/A

Specimen Type	Container and Storage Temperature	Preliminary Results	Final Negative	Final Positive	Notes
MRO Screen	Sterile swab in C&S transport medium Specimen holding temperature: Room temperature	N/A	24 hours	24 hours	N/A
Nasal Culture	Sterile swab in C&S transport medium Specimen holding temperature: Room temperature	N/A	48 hours	48 to 72 hours	Specimen examined for *S.aureus* only
Oral Culture	Sterile swab in C&S transport medium Specimen holding temperature: Room temperature	N/A	72 hours	72 to 96 hours	Specimen examined for yeast only
Rapid Respiratory Panel (RPP)	UTM or Saline Gargle Specimen holding temperature: Refrigerated	N/A	4 to 72 hours	4 to 72 hours	N/A
Respiratory Culture	Sterile container Specimen holding temperature: Refrigerated	Gram stain: 24 hours Culture: 24 hours	48 hours	48 to 72 hours	N/A
SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19)	UTM or Saline Gargle Specimen holding temperature: Refrigerated	N/A	4 to 72 hours	4 to 72 hours	N/A

Specimen Type	Container and Storage Temperature	Preliminary Results	Final Negative	Final Positive	Notes
Throat Culture	Sterile swab in C&S transport medium Specimen holding temperature: Room temperature	N/A	48 hours	24 to 48 hours	Specimen examined for *S.pyogenes* (GAS) only
Tip Culture	Sterile container Specimen holding temperature: Refrigerated	Gram stain: N/A Culture: 24 hours	48 hours	48 to 72 hours	N/A
Urine Culture	Sterile container or Urine Transport Tube Specimen holding temperature: ➢ Orange top refrigerated ➢ Blue top room temperature or refrigerated	N/A	Midstream/ Indwelling Catheter: 24 hours Suprapubic/ Straight/ Intermittent Catheter: 48 hours	24 to 48 hours 48 to 72 hours	N/A
VRE Screen	Sterile swab in C&S transport medium Specimen holding temperature: Room temperature	N/A	48 hours	48 to 72 hours	N/A
Wet Prep Screen	Sterile swab in C&S transport medium Specimen holding temperature: Room temperature	N/A	24 hours	24 hours	Sample is rejected if it is > 72 hours old Refer to MIC10110-Bacterial Vaginosis Job Aid

Specimen Type	Container and Storage Temperature	Preliminary Results	Final Negative	Final Positive	Notes
Wound Culture (superficial)	Sterile swab in C&S transport medium Specimen holding temperature: Room temperature	Gram stain: 24 hours Culture: 24 hours	48 hours	48 to 72 hours	N/A
Wound Culture (deep)	Sterile swab in C&S transport medium Specimen holding temperature: Room temperature	Gram stain: 24 hours Culture: 24 hours	5 days	48 to 72 hours	N/A
Yeast Culture	Sterile swab in C&S transport medium Specimen holding temperature: Room temperature	N/A	72 hours	72 to 96 hours	Refer to MIC10110-Bacterial Vaginosis Job Aid for yeast ordered on vaginal specimens

REFERENCES:

1. Leber, A. (2016). *Clinical microbiology procedures handbook.* (4thed.) Washington, D.C.: ASM Press
2. Jorgensen J.H., Pfaller M.A., Carroll K.C., Funke G., Landry M.L., Richter S.S., Warnock D.W. (2015). *Manual of Clinical Microbiology, 11th edition*. Washington, D.C: ASM Press

APPROVAL:

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Date

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REVISION HISTORY:

REVISION	DATE	Description of Change	REQUESTED BY
1.0	26 Apr 17	Initial Release	L. Steven
2.0	05 Mar 19	Update to reflect increase in turnaround time for Group B screen	L. Steven
3.0	30 Jan 22	Procedure reviewed and added to NTHSSA policy template	L. Steven