

BACTERIOLOGY TESTS

Investigation	Test	Sample	Container	TAT	Comments	Out-of-Hours	Rejection Criteria
Ascitic Fluid Culture	Cell count, Gram stain & Culture	ascitic fluid	universal (white top)	2-3 days for interim report plus 2 days for enrichment culture	cell counts performed only on SBP patients	yes, by arrangement	form / sample labelling error; leaking specimen container
Blood Cultures (Adults)	Gram stain & Culture	5-10mls blood	adult blood culture set	1-5 days, depending on positivity	samples should be collected before antibiotic treatment	bottles should be sent to the incubator located in Pathology reception	exterior surfaces grossly contaminated with blood unlabelled specimens
Blood Cultures (Children)	Gram stain & Culture	<4mls blood	paediatric blood culture bottle	1-5 days, depending on positivity	samples should be collected before antibiotic treatment	bottles should be sent to the incubator located in Pathology reception	exterior surfaces grossly contaminated with blood unlabelled specimens
C. difficile Toxin	Toxin Detection	faeces	universal with spoon (blue top)	1 day	not performed on formed stools; not performed if a positive result within previous 28 days	no	form / sample labelling error; leaking specimen container
Corneal Scrape Culture	Gram stain & Culture	corneal scrape	direct inoculation onto plates and slide	2 hours for microscopy, 2-5 days for culture	requires good amount of cellular material acanthamoeba culture requires 24 hours notice	yes, by arrangement	none
Cough Swab Culture	Culture	cough swab	transport swab (blue top)	2-3 days	culture directed to CF-associated pathogens	no	form / sample labelling error

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CSF Culture	Cell count, Gram stain & Culture	1-2mls CSF	3 sterile universal containers (white top), labelled 1,2,3	2 hours for microscopy, 2 days for culture	cell counts cannot be performed on clotted samples	yes, by arrangement	none
Ear Swab Culture	Culture	ear swab	transport swab (blue top)	2-3 days	none	no	form / sample labelling error
Eye Swab Culture	Culture	eye swab	transport swab (blue top)	2-3 days	none	no	form / sample labelling error
Faeces Culture	Microscopy & Culture	faeces	universal with spoon (blue top)	2-3 days	clinical details are essential for processing	no	form / sample labelling error; leaking specimen container
Fungal Culture	Microscopy & Culture	skin, hair, nails	fungal culture kit / universal (white top)	2 days for microscopy; 4-6 weeks for culture	none	no	form / sample labelling error
Gonococcal Infection	Culture	urethral swab	transport swab (blue top)	2 days	transport delay may reduce sensitivity of test	no	form / sample labelling error
Gonococcal Infection	Culture	endocervical swab	transport swab (blue top)	2 days	transport delay may reduce sensitivity of test	no	form / sample labelling error

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IV Cannulae Culture	Culture	end of cannula tip	universal (white top)	2-3 days	none	no	form / sample labelling error
Joint Fluid Culture	Gram stain, Crystals & Culture	joint fluid	universal (white top)	2-3 days for interim report plus 2 days for enrichment culture	crystals examination by request only	yes, by arrangement	form / sample labelling error; leaking specimen container
Lavage Culture	Gram stain & Culture	broncho-alveolar lavage	universal (white top)	2-3 days	none	no	form / sample labelling error; leaking specimen container
Leg Ulcer Swab Culture	Culture	leg ulcer swab	transport swab (blue top)	2-3 days	routine swabbing is unnecessary unless there is indication of infection	no	form / sample labelling error
Mouth Swab Culture	Culture	mouth swab	transport swab (blue top)	2-3 days	Culture directed to Candida sp. only	no	form / sample labelling error
MRSA Culture	Culture	swab / urine	transport swab (blue top) / universal container	2-3 days	Culture directed to MRSA only	no	form / sample labelling error; axilla & groin swabs are not accepted
Neonatal Screen Culture	Culture	swabs & gastric aspirate	transport swab (blue top) / universal container	2-3 days	swabs from throat, umbilicus and ear	no	form / sample labelling error

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Nose Swab Culture	Culture	nose swab	transport swab (blue top)	2-3 days	pernasal swabs are required for the isolation of Pertussis sp. culture directed to Staph. aureus only	no	form / sample labelling error
Parasitology	Microscopy	urine	universal (white top)	2 days	Collection of urine between 10am and 2pm	no	form / sample labelling error; leaking specimen container
Parasitology	Microscopy	faeces	universal with spoon (blue top)	2 days	Please contact laboratory if "hot-stool" examination is required History of foreign travel is essential	no	form / sample labelling error; leaking specimen container
Parasitology	Microscopy	sellotape slide	collections kits available from laboratory	2 days	none	no	form / sample labelling error
PD Fluid Culture	Cell count, Gram stain & Culture	peritoneal dialysis fluid	universal (white top)	2 hours for microscopy, 2-3 days for interim report plus 2 days for enrichment culture	differential cell counts not performed	yes, by arrangement	form / sample labelling error; leaking specimen container
Pertussis Culture	Culture	pernasal swab	pernasal swab (orange top) obtained from laboratory	7 days	none	no	form / sample labelling error
Pleural Fluid Culture	Gram stain & Culture	pleural fluid	universal (white top)	2-3 days for interim report plus 2 days for enrichment culture	none	yes, by arrangement	form / sample labelling error; leaking specimen container

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Pus Culture	Gram stain & Culture	pus	universal (white top)	2-3 days for interim report plus 2 days for enrichment culture	none	yes, by arrangement	form / sample labelling error; leaking specimen container
Rotavirus Detection	Antigen Detection	faeces	universal with spoon (blue top)	1 day	limited to children <4years	no	form / sample labelling error; leaking specimen container
Skin Swab Culture	Culture	skin swab	transport swab (blue top)	2-3 days	none	no	form / sample labelling error
Sputum Culture	Gram stain & Culture	sputum	universal (white top)	2-3 days	samples should be collected early morning or after physio	no	form / sample labelling error; leaking specimen container
TB Culture	Culture	urine	EMU bottles obtained from laboratory	8-10 weeks	no microscopy performed on urine TB samples	no	form / sample labelling error; leaking specimen container; incorrect container
TB Culture	Microscopy & Culture	sputum / BAL	universal (white top)	2 days for microscopy; 8-10 weeks for culture	none	Urgent microscopy, only after consultation with Consultant Microbiologist	form / sample labelling error; leaking specimen container
TB Culture	Microscopy & Culture	tissue	universal (white top)	2 days for microscopy; 8-10 weeks for culture	none	Urgent microscopy, only after consultation with Consultant Microbiologist	form / sample labelling error

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Throat Swab Culture	Culture	throat swab	transport swab (blue top)	2-3 days	Isolation of Neisseria sp only performed on request	no	form / sample labelling error
Tissue Culture	Gram stain & Culture	tissue	universal (white top)	2-3 days for interim report plus 2 days for enrichment culture	none	yes, by arrangement	none
Urine Culture	Microscopy & Culture	urine	universal with boric acid (red top)	1-2 days	none	yes, by arrangement	form / sample labelling error; leaking specimen container
Vaginal Swab Culture	Microscopy & Culture	high vaginal swab	transport swab (blue top)	2-3 days	clinical details are essential for processing	no	form / sample labelling error
Wound Swab Culture	Culture	wound swab	transport swab (blue top)	2-3 days	pus sample should be sent, if available	no	form / sample labelling error