

Non-Gynecologic Cytology Specimen Collection Instructions General Instructions

Specimen labeling: Label the specimen container with the patient's first and last name, one other identifier (DOB, SSN, MRN) and source of specimen. All direct smeared slides must be labeled with patient's name in pencil. Ink is not acceptable as it will dissolve during processing.

Completed requisition: A completed requisition must accompany all specimens.

Use of fixative or refrigeration: Specimens must be properly preserved. Various methods are appropriate.

- **Cytology fixative:** Specimens may be preserved in a cytology fixative in a volume equal to specimen volume (1:1 ratio). Place lid tightly on specimen container and shake gently to ensure uniform fixation of cells. A specimen is stable indefinitely if collected in fixative. The fixed specimen does not need to be refrigerated.
- **Direct smears:** Collect the material directly onto a glass slide. Oppose a second glass slide onto the first, allowing the collected material to provide surface tension between the two slides. Then quickly and gently, with minimal pressure, pull the two slides apart in a horizontal motion to distribute the material in a thin film over both slides.

It is imperative that the material be fixed immediately after smearing. Speed in preparing and fixing the smear is critical. Air drying, which starts to occur within 5 seconds of spreading the smear may make the smear difficult or impossible to read. Immediately spray the slide with cytology spray fixative or immerse in 95% ETOH. If direct smears are spray fixed, allow the fixative to dry before placing slides in plastic slide container.

- **Fresh:** Certain specimens may be submitted to the laboratory fresh but should be refrigerated and submitted immediately.

Transport: Each fluid specimen must be submitted in a separate, clearly labeled, leak proof container. Place the specimen container in a biohazard bag, insert completed requisition into outside pouch and send to laboratory.

Miscellaneous or Non-Routine Cytology Specimen Collection

For handling and processing specimens other than ones in this manual, contact a cytotechnologist, histotechnologist or pathologist.