

## CYTOLOGY SPECIMEN COLLECTION AND HANDLING REQUIREMENTS Quick Reference Guide

- Each specimen must be submitted in a separate, clearly labeled, leak proof container. Place lid tightly on specimen container.
- If submitting in fixative, shake gently to ensure uniform fixation of cells.
- If submitting fresh send to laboratory immediately, refrigerate if delayed.
- Label the specimen container/slides with the patient's name, source of specimen, and one other identifier (date of birth, SSN, MRN, etc.). When labeling slides use a graphite (lead) pencil only; ink will dissolve during processing.
- Place the specimen container in a biohazard bag, insert completed requisition into outside pouch and send to laboratory.

<b>Specimen type</b>	<b>Specimen Requirements</b>	<b>Additional Instructions</b>
Body Fluid <i>pleural (thoracic), peritoneal (ascites), pericardial, cyst, and synovial</i>	Submit specimen in a labeled cytology fixative container or submit fresh. 20 mL to 50 mL preferred.	
Brushing <i>(bronchial, gastroesophageal, small bowel, tracheal, ureteral)</i>	Submit brush in a labeled cytology fixative container or submit fresh in saline. Alternatively, direct smears may be submitted. Direct smears should be spray fixed or immersed in 95% ETOH.	Label all prepared slides with patient's name (using lead pencil). <b>Two slides are required if special fungal stains (e.g. GMS) are requested.</b>
Breast Secretion <i>(nipple discharge)</i>	Direct smears should be spray fixed or immersed in 95% ETOH. Alternatively place material directly into a cytology fixative container. Indicate left or right breast on each slide/container.	Label all prepared slides with patient's name (using lead pencil).
Fine Needle Aspirate <i>(FNA , needle biopsy)</i>	Submit material directly into a container of cytology fixative. In addition, direct smears may be submitted. Direct smears may be air dried, spray fixed, or immersed in 95% ETOH.	Label all prepared slides with patient's name (using lead pencil).
Spinal Fluid <i>(cerebrospinal fluid, CSF)</i>	Submit specimen in a cytology fixative container or submit fresh. 1 mL minimum, 10 mL preferred.	<b>Note: A separate specimen without fixative must be submitted to microbiology dept. if culture is requested.</b>
Sputum	Submit specimen in a labeled cytology fixative container or submit fresh. 1 mL minimum; 3 mL to 10 mL preferred. Deep cough specimens only, NO saliva.	The patient should be instructed to clear the throat of postnasal secretions and to gargle and rinse their mouth to remove food residue.
Tzanck smear <i>(skin vesicle)</i>	Direct smears should be spray fixed or immersed in 95% ETOH. Alternatively place material directly into a PreservCyt vial.	Label all prepared slides with patient's name (using lead pencil). Indicate source, e.g. lip, leg.
Urine Specify source: <i>Voided Catheterized</i>	Submit specimen in a labeled cytology fixative container or submit fresh. 50 mL to 100 mL preferred. <b>24 HOUR collections are NOT acceptable due to degeneration.</b>	Have the patient void and discard 1 <sup>st</sup> early morning urine.
Washing <i>(bronchial, bladder, gastrointestinal tract, pelvic, peritoneal)</i>	Submit specimen in a labeled cytology fixative container or submit fresh.	<b>Note: A separate specimen without fixative must be submitted to microbiology dept. if culture is requested.</b>