

Outpatient Cytopathology Center  
2400 Susannah Street, Suite A  
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## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

### **Specimen Collection / Labeling / Handling / Transport Manual**

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**Purpose:** To establish a protocol for collecting specimens.

**Principle:** Specimens are collected from a variety of sites for the detection of malignant and benign processes. The site from which the sample is collected dictates the method of collection. The method of collection affects the morphology of cellular samples. The importance of proper specimen collection and submission is essential. Clinical personnel should be trained in the appropriate submission of samples as well as in procedural techniques. The laboratory must provide instructions for proper collection of all specimens. The instructions must be made available to the personnel at the location where the specimens are collected.

#### **PROCEDURES:**

1. A copy of the OCC Specimen Collection Manual is available on the OCC website, [www.outpatientcytopathologycenter](http://www.outpatientcytopathologycenter)
2. The medical director and/or pathologists are responsible for changing/updating any specimen collection/handling procedures prior to implementation.
3. All specimen collection/handling policies/procedures will be reviewed annually by the medical director.

#### **SPECIMEN SUBMISSION:**

##### **General Labeling Instructions**

Specimen containers are to be labeled with BOTH the patient's name and date of birth. If appropriate identifying information is not on the primary specimen container and the requisition, the specimen will be withheld at OCC from processing or returned to the submitting physician's office until the required data is obtained. Specimens lacking requisite information are entered into the specimen rejection log and appropriate action to remedy the problem is pursued and corrective action recorded.

##### **Surgical Biopsy:**

Submit in 10% buffered formalin. Formalin/specimen volume ratio should be >10:1. Specimen containers must be labeled with patient name, date of birth, biopsy location and biopsy date and accompanied by a histology requisition.

**Slides:** Air dried and fixed smears should be submitted in containers that protect against breakage. Slide containers are available in a variety of shapes, volumes and material. Optimal design features include easily opened containers which stay closed during

transport, shock resistant material and enough room to prevent slides from adhering to one another or the container. The slides should be marked clearly with the patient's name as well as one other identifier such as date of birth. If more than one site is sampled, the slides must be clearly marked as to their site. Enclosure in a transport bag indicating biohazardous contents is required. Slides may be mailed according to transport guidelines. A paper or electronic requisition must accompany the specimen. Slides in fixative should be submitted in leak-proof containers that protect against breakage and are clearly labeled with the patient's name and specimen site(s). The slides in fixative may be placed in a secondary container or transport bag to avoid leakage of fixative during transport. Paper requisitions that accompany slides in fixative should be placed in an outside pocket to avoid exposure to any leakage of fixative.

**Liquid transport:** Each fluid specimen container should be labeled with two identifiers, patient name and date of birth. The specimen should be placed in a clearly labeled container including patient name and date of birth, that is leak-proof. Enclosure in a transport bag indicating biohazardous contents is required. Paper requisitions that accompany slides in fixative should be placed in an outside pocket to avoid exposure to any leakage of fixative. Needles should never be transported with fluid specimens. Large glass collection containers should be avoided.

**Nipple secretions:** Place the air-dried or cyto-fixed specimen in a cardboard or plastic transport container. Slides must be labeled with patient name and preferably a second identifier. Place the transport container and requisition slip in a biohazard bag. Call courier for pick-up or send via US mail. If the specimen is to be sent by US mail or other carrier, package in a rigid leak proof container with absorbent material. Mark the package as "exempt human."

**Urine:** Obtain a clean catch or bladder irrigation specimen. Place in a urine specimen cup. Specimen cup must be labeled with patient name and date of birth. Place the urine specimen cup in a biohazard bag. If available, wrap parafilm around the lid and upper portion of the urine specimen cup. Label the container with the patient's name, date of birth, date and time of urine collection and physician's name. Place requisition slip and urine in a biohazard bag.

If applicable, call for an OCC courier immediately so that the specimen can be picked up and analyzed within two hours of collection. If specimen preparation cannot be done within two hours, refrigerate the specimen (2-8 degrees Celsius) after collection. Specimens may be refrigerated at this temperature for up to 24 hours.

If the specimen cannot be analyzed within two hours and refrigeration is not possible, preserve the specimen by mixing a 1:1 ratio of urine and 50% reagent alcohol.

**Breast cyst fluid:** Place the breast cyst fluid in a biohazard bag. Specimen container must be labeled with patient name and date of birth. If available, wrap parafilm around the lid and upper portion of the breast cyst fluid container. Label the container with the patient's name, date of birth, date and time of cyst fluid collection and physician's name. Place requisition slip and cyst fluid in a biohazard bag.

If applicable, call for an OCC courier immediately so that the specimen can be picked up and analyzed within two hours of collection. If specimen preparation cannot be done within two hours, refrigerate the specimen (2-8 degrees Celsius) after collection. Specimens may be refrigerated at this temperature for up to 24 hours.

If the specimen cannot be analyzed within two hours and refrigeration is not possible, preserve the specimen by mixing a 1:1 ratio of cyst fluid and 50% reagent alcohol.

**FNA:** Place the air-dried slides from the FNA in either a cardboard or plastic transport container. Slides must be labeled with patient name and a second identifier. Put the transport container in a biohazard bag along with the specimen requisition. The specimen can be placed in a padded mailing envelope and sent by US mail or other carrier. Label the outside container with the words "exempt human."

#### **THRESHOLDS:**

The medical director is responsible for the quality of surgical pathology or cytology specimens received. She will make suggestions for modifications or improvements as needed.

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