

# Collection of Microbiological Cultures



Only collect bacterial cultures in symptomatic patients

## Urine Cultures

Symptom-Free Pee → Let It Be!

### Residents without a catheter

- Midstream clean catch is preferred method
  - Always clean urethral meatus prior to collection
  - Consider collecting urine after the resident has taken a bath
- In-and-out catheterization if unable to obtain midstream specimen
  - This requires sterile technique and should be performed by a registered nurse
  - Alternative to in-and-out catheterization for men: place and obtain specimen from newly placed condom catheter

### Residents with a catheter

- Change urinary catheter prior to collecting sample if catheter has been in place for more than 2 weeks or an unknown period
- To obtain a urine sample from a clean, newly placed urinary catheter, follow these steps:
  1. Wash your hands and put on new sterile gloves before obtaining your specimen.
  2. If no urine is in the tube, clamp the tube for 15–30 minutes prior to procedure.
  3. Clean the collecting port with an alcohol wipe prior to access.
  4. Insert a 10cc syringe at an angle into the port. Draw back 3–5 ml.
  5. Insert specimen into sterile container.
  6. Date, label, and time the specimen. Transfer to lab or refrigerator **within 15 minutes**.

## Respiratory Cultures

### When to collect a specimen

- Only if pneumonia is suspected—not for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), bronchitis, or upper respiratory tract infections
- Prior to antibiotic administration

NOTE: A positive specimen does not necessarily mean that the organism is causing an infection. Many organisms are naturally present in the oral flora, and clinical context must be considered.

### How to collect a specimen

1. Wash hands and use new gloves.
2. Obtain an early morning specimen.
3. Ask the resident to rinse his/her mouth out with water before collection and tell the resident you need phlegm from deep in his/her lungs.
4. Collect specimen in a sterile container.
5. Transfer to the lab or the refrigerator **within 15 minutes**.

## References

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CDC Specimen Collection Guidelines.  
<https://www.cdc.gov/urdo/downloads/SpecCollectionGuidelines.pdf>.

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