

Evaluation of the Patient Sample

GUIDELINE 2: Microbiology Sample Acceptance and Rejection

- **Never reject specimens from critical sites; CSF, sterile fluid, aspirated fluid and tissue**
- When rejecting samples, always provide written notification of rejection to ordering physician using DOE: Cancel Orders CIS SM 220 or <fs> LIS order cancellation directions. Select appropriate cancel reason and append additional cancellation information as required.
- **Hold samples for 3 days in appropriate storage conditions.**
- Generate a written report using DOE and ordering “Comment”. Result in ARE. See CIS SM 380: Resulting Comment Order.
- When processing samples and clarification is need for a sample deficiency, use the comment icon (paperclip) on the app bar and add a comment refer to CIS SM170. Select the appropriate comment as directed below.
- Microbiology samples that have gone through an x-ray, as part of airport security, are acceptable and can be worked up as per normal procedures

Criterion	Required Action
More than one sample of urine, stool, sputum, wound or throat on the same day from the same source	Process one sample. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <REJDUP> “Specimen not processed as duplicate specimens were received within 24 hours.”
No collection date or time is indicated on the requisition or specimen container	Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <COLLT> “Collection time not indicated on requisition. This information is required for optimal processing of microbiology specimens.” • <COLLD> “Collection date not indicated on requisition. This information is required for optimal processing of microbiology specimens.”
Cracked or leaking container	Reject <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <LEAKY> “Specimen leaked in transit. Please submit another specimen.”
Specimen received in a nonsterile container	Reject <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <REJNS> “Specimen received in a non-sterile container. Please recollect the specimen in a sterile container.”



Criterion	Required Action
Culture swab >5 days Stool NOT in transport media >24hrs Sputum samples >48 hours Urine in transport media >3 days Unpreserved urine held at room temperature (20-25°C) for >2 hours or unpreserved urine held in refrigerator for >24 hours.	Reject <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add comment <DELAY> “Specimen not processed due to delay in transport. Suggest recollection if clinically indicated.” • <i>**consult with supervisor prior to rejection if sample is from a very remote site, or there have been recent notable transport delays</i>
Chlamydia/GC or Trichomonas swab (Aptima) >60 days Chlamydia/GC or Trichomonas urine in urine transport tube (Aptima) >30 days	Reject <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add comment <DELAY> “Specimen not processed due to delay in transport. Suggest recollection if clinically indicated.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture swab > 48 hours • Stool in transport media for bacterial culture >96 hours • Stool in transport media for ova and parasite exam >7 days. • Sputum (or other LRT) sample in transit >24 hours • Urine in transport media >2 days 	Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <DIT> “Results may be compromised due to delay in transit.”
Swab for Neisseria gonorrhoea culture >24 hours	Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <GCDIT> “The specimen was received greater than 24 hours after collection. Recovery rates of Neisseria gonorrhoeae can be significantly reduced when specimens are not cultured within 24 hours.”



Criterion	Required Action
Chlamydia/GC urine in MSU urine container >24 hours	Reject <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add comment <REJCTGCUR> “Urine Chlamydia/GC NAAT test was not performed because sample collection and preparation was not followed. Urine sample must be transferred to APTIMA urine transport tube within 24 hours. Recollect if clinically indicated”
Stool for C. difficile >72 hrs C. difficile ordered on a child <1 year old C. difficile ordered on a patient that has already tested as positive within the last 30 days C. difficile ordered on a patient that has already test negative in the last 7 days C. difficile stool sample in an incorrect container Request for Clostridium difficile toxin test on formed stool C. difficile stool sample frozen	Process sample: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add comment <DELAY> “Specimen not processed due to delay in transport. Suggest recollection if clinically indicated.” • <CDT1> “Specimen not processed. C. difficile infection is not performed on stool samples from children under 1 year of age as asymptomatic carriage of C. difficile is common. Other causes of diarrhea should be considered.” • <CDT30> “Specimen not processed. Patient has tested positive for C. difficile toxin within the previous 30 days. Repeat testing is not recommended as stool may remain positive within this time frame even with the resolution of symptoms. Recurrence of C. difficile is common and best diagnosed clinically.” • <CDT7> “Specimen not processed. C. difficile toxin negative in the last 7 days. This test has a high negative predictive value. Repeat testing is not indicated.” • <CDTWC> “Specimen not processed. Stool samples for C. difficile must be submitted in a sterile container without transport medium or fixative. Please recollect if clinically indicated.” • <CDTF> “Specimen not processed. Clostridium difficile testing is not indicated on formed stool sample.” • Reject as invalid sample.



Criterion	Required Action
Stool sample for culture received in fixative	Reject: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add comment <REJST1> “Stool specimen not collected into the proper transport container. Please recollect and submit in Enteric Transport container.”
Stool sample for O&P received in C&S transport media	Reject: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add comment <REJST2> “Stool specimen not collected into the proper transport container. Please recollect and submit in a container with SAF fixative.”
Second stool sample for O&P received on an adult with no high risk factors indicated	Reject: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add comment <REJST3> “Multiple stool specimens for O&P exam are not routinely processed unless a high risk condition is indicated.”
Request for stool culture or ova and parasite exam on inpatient >3 days after admission <i>Exception is patient admitted with diagnosis of gastroenteritis.</i>	Reject: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <REJST4> “Stool Culture and/or O&P exam are not routinely performed on patients hospitalised more than 3 days. Consult microbiology lab if a nosocomial infection is suspected.”
More than 2 stool samples received for culture on a patient.	Culture two samples and reject remainder unless ordered in consultation with a Pathologist. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add comment <REJST5> “Stool culture not performed-see previous culture results.”
Excess barium (white, chalky) or oil noted in stool submitted for ova and parasite examination	Reject <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide written notification that the barium or oil will obscure the examination and that a sample should be resubmitted in 10 days.
Foley catheter tip, vomitus, lochia, gastric aspirate, colostomy discharge.	Reject <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add comment <REJIVS> “Specimen not cultured. This is an inappropriate specimen for culture and will not yield meaningful results.”
Fluid from a sterile site received on a swab	Culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add the comment <FLUSWAB> “For optimal recovery of organisms, fluid specimens from sterile body sites should be submitted in a sterile container, not on a swab.”
Insufficient sample received for multiple requests for various organisms (bacteria, AFB, fungi, virus, etc).	Request additional material: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If not available, ask physician to prioritize.



Criterion	Required Action
Urine culture transport tube is not filled to the minimum fill line	Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add comment <URTRAN> “Inadequate urine volume collected into urine transport tube. Insufficient urine/ preservative ratio may compromise organism recovery.”
Frozen specimen for routine bacterial culture	Reject <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add comment <FROZEN> “Requested exam not processed. Specimen was frozen in transit.”
Sample for anaerobes not received in appropriate container >12 hours from collection	Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add comment <DELANA> “Specimen not received in anaerobic transport media. Recovery rates on anaerobic organisms could be reduced”
Anaerobic culture requested on mouth, nose, throat, sputum, bronchial wash or aspirates, exudate, superficial site, stool, material from ileostomy or colostomy, gastric washing (other than newborn), urine, prostatic secretions, vaginal secretions, fistula or intestinal contents.	Culture for aerobic organisms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do NOT culture for anaerobic organisms • Add comment <REJANA> “Specimen not cultured for anaerobic organisms, inappropriate specimen type.”
Gram stain request on samples from cervix, throat (except for yeast only), nose, urine, or stool.	Process specimen for culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add comment <REJGRAM> “Gram stain not performed, invalid sample type.”
Sputum culture requested on a swab from patient older than 10 years	Provide written notification that only a screening culture for Group A streptococci will be performed. Perform routine throat culture. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Exceptions are transplant, spinal cord injury with no cough response and head and neck clinic patients.</i>
Sputum sample with >10 squamous epithelial cells and <25 WBC/lpf	Provide written notification that specimen is mostly saliva and not appropriate for culture. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <OC> “Sputum specimen unsuitable for culture due to oral contamination. Suggest repeat culture.”
Two Chlamydia/GC NAAT swabs or no swab sent	Reject: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <CTGCSWAB> “Chlamydia/GC NAAT test not performed because swab sample collection and preparation instructions were not followed.”



Criterion	Required Action
Incorrect swab received Chlamydia/GC NAAT	Reject <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <CTGCSWABINV> “Chlamydia/GC NAAT test not performed. Swab sample was collected using an incorrect collection kit. Only Gen-Probe Aptima collection kits can be used for Chlamydia/GC NAAT testing at UHNBC.”
Incorrect swab received for Trichomonas NAAT	Reject <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add comment: Trichomonas NAAT test not performed. Swab sample was collected using an incorrect collection kit. Only Gen-Probe Aptima collection kits can be used for Trichomonas NAAT testing.”
Urine sample for Chlamydia/ GC NAAT received in the same container as a urine for culture	Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add comment <CTG CURINI> “Urine sample was received in the same container as the midstream urine for culture. Test sensitivity may be decreased. Urine samples for Chlamydia/ GC NAAT should be the first 20 to 30 mL of initial stream urine collected in a separate container. When giving instructions to the patient, please include a separate container with a line drawn at the 30 mL mark for the initial stream urine. Recollect if clinically indicated.”
Incorrect urine volume for Chlamydia/GC NAAT received (>30 mL or <20mL) in sterile cup prior to pour off into Aptima urine kit	Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add comment <CTG CURVOL> “Urine sample volume submitted is more than the manufacturer recommended 30 mL volume or less than the manufacturer recommended 20 mL volume. Test sensitivity may be decreased. Recollect if clinically indicated.”
Urine volume for Chlamydia/ GC NAAT is not between fill line indicated on transport tube	Reject <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <CTG CURVFS> “Chlamydia/GC NAAT test not performed. Instrument is unable to process when urine transport tube is over- or underfilled. 2 mL of urine should be transferred to the transport tube so that the liquid level in the tube is between the two lines.”
OR swab received in conjunction with tissues from the same surgical collection and site	Reject <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <CNCLSWAB> “Swabs received in conjunction with tissue samples are no longer processed. Swabs are suboptimal intra-operative specimens. Tissue or fluid aspirates are the preferred specimen type.”