



Microbiology Requirements

source	specimen requirement	turnaround time
Stool culture (for Salmonella, Shigella, Campylobacter and E. coli O157.) Other pathogens by special request.	Fresh feces in clean, leakproof container. If delay in transport is anticipated, submit stool in Cary-Blair or enteric transport media, room temperature. DO NOT REFRIGERATE. Clostridium difficile cultures must be submitted in a separate REFRIGERATED container.	Final at 48 hours
Upper respiratory – throat	Only the presence/absence of Beta Strep "A" is reported. If diphtheria or pertussis is suspected, call lab for instructions.	Final at 24 to 48 hours
Urine culture	Store and transport refrigerated. Indicate collection method: indwelling cath (Foley), straight cath, or clean catch.	Final at 24 to 48 hours
Gonorrhea screen (<i>N. gonorrhoeae</i> only) Urogenital culture (All bacterial pathogens including GC)	MALE: Collect urethral discharge or anterior urethral scraping. FEMALE: Cervical swab is preferred to urethral or vaginal swab. Place in culturette with Amies or Stuarts media. Store and transport at room temperature. Indicate specimen source if non-genital.	Final at 48 hours, preliminary results sent when significant results available.
Wound culture	Collect 2 swabs or aspirate deep areas, avoiding skin flora. Place both swabs in single culturette. Maintain at room temperature.	Final at 48 hours, preliminary results sent when significant results available.
Fluid / Tissue culture	Do not send swabs. Send actual fluid in a syringe without a needle, or in a sterile container with a secure lid. Send tissue in a sterile container. Add saline if necessary to avoid drying.	Final at 48 hours, preliminary results sent when significant results available.
AFB (TB) culture	Submit at least 5 mL sputum, bronch washings or other lower respiratory source. Swab specimens are not acceptable.	6 weeks
Antibiotic Susceptibility	Performed on significant isolates only.	24 hours
Ova/Parasite exam	Submit walnut size portion of stool in clean leakproof container. Transport ASAP. If delay in transport is expected, submit in 10% formalin, PVA, Unifix, or other suitable transport media. Specimens must be collected AT LEAST 24 hours apart if multiple exams are requested.	24-48 hours
Wet mount (for yeast, trich. and clue cells)	Submit a swab of urogenital discharge using Culturette. Maintain at room temperature.	Up to 24 hours
KOH mount (for fungal elements)	Submit skin scrapings in clean, dry, covered container. (See wet mount for genital specimens.)	Up to 24 hours
Legionella culture	Submit at least 3-5 mL pleural fluid, bronchial brushings/washings, tracheal aspirate, sputum (least desirable specimen), or small piece of lung tissue in a sterile, leakproof container. Refrigerate.	Preliminary at 4 days, final at 7 days
Pneumocystis FA stain	Submit induced sputum, bronchial washings, bronchoalveolar lavage, tracheal aspirate, lung tissue or air-dried slides of any of the above. Maintain at room temperature.	Final at 24 hours
NP for Pertussis – DFA only (Contact lab for Pertussis culture collection instructions.)	Gently insert nasopharyngeal swab (wire-shafted calcium alginate or Dacron) through the nostril until it touches the back of the nasopharynx. Collect specimens from each nostril and roll each swab on two separate slides, one specimen over the other, at center of each slide. Allow smears to air dry.	Final at 24 hours
Blood For AFB	10 mL SPS whole blood (yellow top tube). Maintain at room temperature. 10 mL whole blood in a heparin tube is acceptable.	8 weeks

These requirements reflect testing performed at Sacred Heart Medical Center in Spokane, Washington. Requirements for testing performed at other facilities may vary. Please call the laboratory at (509) 755-8600 or 1-800-541-7891 for further information or supplies.

Provided for the clients of