

HISTOLAB SPECIMEN COLLECTION GUIDE

Labelling Specimen

Ensure the specimen container is labelled with the patient's full name, DOB, and site of biopsy. This information must correlate with the information on the accompanying pathology request slip.

Completing a Pathology Request Slip

A completed pathology request slip (A5 personalised, A4, A4 with labels) must accompany the patient's specimen.

The request slip must have as a minimum; the patient's full name, DOB, address, clinical notes, test requested, referring doctor details, collection date and referring doctor's signature. Please also provide private health fund details (if inpatient), billing instruction (private billing unless indicated otherwise) and patient signature (for Medicare assignment/bulk billing).

Factors which can affect the reporting of referred cases may include unlabelled or mislabelled specimens; incomplete or incorrect details on the request slip; missing specimens.

Collection, Storage and Transport

Routine Histology

The critical requirements for these specimens are to (1) prevent the specimen from drying out, (2) to transfer the specimen into 10% Neutral Buffered Formalin immediately and (3) to avoid using solutions other than 10% Neutral Buffered Formalin.

For best results, keep specimens in 10% Neutral Buffered Formalin at room temperature.

Select the appropriate sized container for the specimen taken i.e. for best results, the specimen needs to be able to float freely in 10% Neutral Buffered Formalin.

Pots pre-filled with 10% Neutral Buffered Formalin (25ml, 70ml and 250ml)

Immerse specimen in 10% Neutral Buffered Formalin as soon as possible after collection. Fasten the lid of the specimen pot securely to prevent leakage or specimen loss. Place the specimen pot in a zip lock biohazard specimen bag and seal. There is a separate pocket in the biohazard specimen bag to place the accompanying pathology request slip.

Pots pre-filled with 10% Neutral Buffered Formalin will be delivered by our Histolab couriers (or TOLL couriers outside of metropolitan Melbourne). The expiration date is printed on the product. A MSDS is available on request.

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Pots and pails for larger specimens (500ml, 1.2L, 2.2L, 5.0L)

Place the specimen in the bottom of the empty labelled container. As soon as possible, gently pour 10% Neutral Buffered Formalin over the specimen until the specimen begins to float i.e. it is no longer resting on the bottom of the container. Fasten the lid of the specimen container securely to prevent leakage or specimen loss. It is recommended that pail lids are secured with packing tape. These specimen containers must remain upright at all times. As these specimen containers will be too large to be sealed in a zip lock biohazard specimen bag, place the accompanying pathology request slip (along with any other smaller specimens from the same patient collected in pre-filled pots) in the biohazard specimen bag and secure this to the pot or pail.

Pots, pails and 5L bottles of 10% Neutral Buffered Formalin will be delivered by our Histolab couriers (or TOLL couriers outside of metropolitan Melbourne). The expiration date of the 10% Neutral Buffered Formalin is printed on the product. A MSDS is available on request.

Specimens for DIF (Direct Immunofluorescence)

Correct collection and preparation of the specimen is critical to the success of the test.

Same Day Courier pick-up:

1. Collect biopsy, place fresh specimen immediately in saline soaked gauze, transfer to an empty labelled pot, fasten the lid securely to prevent leakage or specimen loss and refrigerate at 4°C until the courier arrives. Do not fill the pot with saline as this may result in osmotic alteration.
2. Ring Histolab (98528622) immediately to request a courier. Let the Histolab staff know that it is a DIF specimen and that it is refrigerated. The courier will arrive as a matter of priority and will transport the specimens directly to the laboratory.
3. DIF specimens should have an accompanying specimen for histology. This is to be placed in a separate labelled formalin-filled specimen pot.
4. Place the specimen pots in a zip lock biohazard specimen bag and seal. There is a separate pocket in the biohazard specimen bag to place the accompanying pathology request slip.

The critical requirements for these specimens are to prevent drying, exposure to elevated temperature and any osmotic alteration.

Delayed Transport (TOLL priority):

Michel's Transport Medium (rather than saline soaked gauze) is used for DIF specimens where delayed transport is anticipated i.e. not same day courier pick-up. Excellent preservation of antigenicity and cellular detail can be expected when using Michel's Transport Medium for up to 72 hours.

1. Bring pre-filled pot of Michel's Transport Medium to room temperature prior to use. (Michel's Transport Medium is routinely stored at 4°C. During refrigerated storage some precipitation may develop on the bottom of the pot. Precipitation

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should re-dissolve by allowing the solution to reach room temperature prior to use).

2. Immerse fresh excised tissue immediately into Michel's Transport Medium, ensuring that the specimen is totally submerged.
3. Fasten the lid of the specimen pot securely to prevent leakage or specimen loss.
4. DIF specimens should have an accompanying specimen for histology. This is to be placed in a separate labelled formalin-filled specimen pot.
5. Place the specimen pots in a zip lock biohazard specimen bag and seal. There is a separate pocket in the biohazard specimen bag to place the accompanying pathology request slip.
6. The specimen is then ready for transport to the laboratory. If transport is not immediate maintain at a cool to ambient temperature between 4°C to 22°C.
7. Transport to the laboratory in the esky provided. It is not necessary to transport the specimen with an ice block.

Pots pre-filled with Michel's Transport Medium will be delivered directly from our supplier and will need to be stored at 4°C on arrival. This will need to be coordinated by a practice nurse or practice manager. The storage requirements and expiration date are printed on the product. A MSDS is available on request.

Further information can be sought from the Laboratory Manager at Histolab (9852 8622).

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