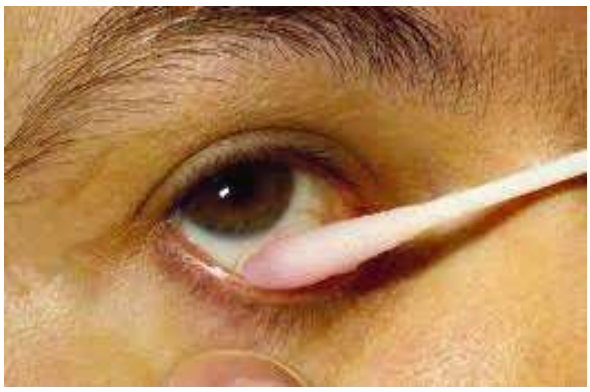
Ocular Swab Collection for Microbiology Cultures

Disinfect skin near eye. Moisten swab in sterile saline. Swab lower conjunctiva, avoiding lid/lashes.



Check that swab is not expired.

Ok to use one or both swabs for collection.

Please indicate right or left eye in order comments and/or handwritten on swab.

Do **NOT** break off swabs into container. We need the long shaft to plate the specimen properly. The ends of the shaft can be inserted into the bottom of the red cap.

Transport at room temperature, ideally within 1 hour of collection, >1 hour, please refrigerate.

Corneal Scraping Specimens Collected by Provider for Microbiology Cultures

Procedure:

1. Instill 1 or 2 drops of topical anesthetic.
    a. Culture yield may be improved by avoiding tetracaine and topical anesthetics with preservatives and thoroughly rinsing the eye with sterile nonbacteriostatic saline or sterile water before collecting specimens.
2. Obtain corneal scrapings from the advancing edge of the ulcer by scraping multiple areas of ulceration and suppuration with sterile Kimura spatula, using short, firm strokes in one direction. Keep the eyelid open and be careful not to touch eyelashes.
3. Obtain approximately three to five scrapings per cornea.
4. For direct inoculation of media, providers should inoculate each set of scrapings onto media listed below, using a C-shaped formation for each scraping.
    a. Media to be used: (Please check expiration dates)
        i. Blood Agar (BAP) (Trypticase Soy Agar w/ 5% Sheep Blood) (Aerobic Culture)
        ii. Chocolate Agar (CHOC) (Aerobic Culture)
        iii. Chopped Meat Broth (CMG) (Cooked Meat Medium w/ Hemin & Vitamin K w/ glucose)* (Aerobic/Anaerobic Culture)
        iv. Sabouraud Dextrose Agar (SAB) (Fungal recovery of yeast and mould)
        v. Microscope Slide with proper identification written (preferred in a slide case for transport)
        vi. Per Request:
            1. Lowenstein Jensen Media (LJ Slant) (Mycobacteriology Nocardia and Acid Fast Bacilli)
            2. M4 Transport Media (Viral)

    *Adding a liquid broth culture medium increases recovery of bacteria from corneal ulcers compared to use of agar media alone. To obtain a specimen for inoculation of liquid medium, a sterile swab (synthetic fiber or cotton) moistened with nonbacteriostatic saline, sterile water, or CMG broth is rubbed across the ulcerated area and the swab tip is swirled into the CMG tube. The swab shaft is then broken and allowed to fall into the broth.

Slide Transport Box

C-Shaped streaks on Agar Plate