




















Swabs and collection techniques

Site	Container	Method
EYE- Bacterial	 Charcoal Transport medium	Hold the swab parallel to the cornea and gently rub the conjunctiva in the lower eyelid. Place the swab inside the transport medium.
EYE - Chlamydia	See Chlamydia	
EYE - Viral		Hold the swab parallel to the cornea and gently rub the conjunctiva in the lower eyelid. Place the swab inside the transport medium. See viral swabs
EAR- Bacterial	 Charcoal Transport medium (wire shaft, orange top swab)	Antibiotics or other chemotherapeutic agents should not be used in the aural canal for three hours prior to the swab being taken. Place the swab in the outer ear and rotate the swab gently. Place the swab inside the transport medium.
NOSE- Bacterial	 Charcoal Transport medium	Moisten the swab before hand with sterile saline. Move the swab from the anterior nares and direct it upwards into the tip of the nose and gently rotate gently.
THROAT-Bacterial	 Charcoal Transport medium	Ask the patient to sit in a comfortable position and depress the tongue with a spatula. Avoid touching the mouth or tongue with the swab. Quickly, but gently, rub the swab over the appropriate area, usually the tonsillar fossa or the area with a lesion or visible exudate. NB: do not obtain throat samples if epiglottis is inflamed, as sampling may cause serious respiratory obstruction.
MOUTH-Bacterial	 Charcoal Transport medium	Rub the swab over the appropriate area. Place the swab inside of the transport medium.
MOUTH - Viral		Rub the swab over the appropriate area. Place the swab inside of the transport medium. See viral swabs.
MRSA/MSSA	 Clear Transport Medium	See appropriate site for sample collection technique.
RECTAL- Bacterial		Pass the swab, with care, through the anus into the rectum.

Site	Container	Method
	Charcoal Transport medium	
RECTAL - Viral		Swab gently any ulcerated areas and place the swab inside the transport medium. See viral swabs.
CHLAMYDIA	Sample collection pack	See Chlamydia
CERVIX- Bacterial	 Charcoal Transport medium	Do not use lubricant during procedure. Wipe the cervix clean of vaginal secretions and mucous. Rotate a sterile swab, and obtain exudate from the endocervical glands. If no exudate is seen, insert a sterile swab (wire shaft - orange top) into the cervical canal and rotate the swab.
VAGINAL/CERVIX - Viral		As above, placing the swab in viral transport medium. See viral swabs.
VAGINA- Bacterial	 Charcoal Transport medium	Use a speculum, without lubricant. Collect secretions from the mucosa high in the vaginal canal with swab.
VIRALSWABS	 Viral Transport medium	Swine Flu: See Trust handout on sample collection Other Viruses: See viral swabs.
URETHRA - Bacterial	 Charcoal Transport medium (wire shaft, orange top swab)	Specialist sample taken by GU Clinic.
ULCER-Bacterial	 Charcoal Transport medium	Remove overlying debris, curette the base of the ulcer. If exudate is present, sample with sterile swab. Place inside of the transport medium.
PENILE- Bacterial	 Charcoal Transport medium	Retract the prepuce and rotate the swab gently around the urethral meatus.

Site	Container	Method
PENILE - Viral		Swab gently any ulcerated areas and place the swab inside the transport medium. See viral swabs.
WHOOPING COUGH (Pertussis)		Swab technique withdrawn. Refer patient to the hospital paediatric team for Nasopharyngeal Aspriate
WOUND-Bacterial	 Charcoal Transport medium	Fluid or pus is preferable to swab collection. If the wound shows signs of clinical infection (heat, redness, swelling, discharge, etc.) this may indicate a deep-seated infection. In this case, the wound should be cleaned, or irrigated, with normal saline. Rotate the swab in the discharge present or the base of the wound to ensure good contact.