

# Specimen Requirements, Repertoire and Turnaround Times

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## 1. Sample Presentation to the Histology Laboratory

It is the responsibility of the requesting clinician to ensure that all relevant clinical information is provided on the request form and that the specimens reach the Histopathology laboratory promptly, and in a suitable condition. It is usually appropriate to place such specimens in formalin fixative but some specimens need to be received fresh for special investigations. In such cases please speak to a Consultant Histopathologist at least a day in advance of the surgical procedure so that appropriate advice on arrangements can be given (via 01622 224051).

Histology specimens must be placed in an adequate sized container together with at least ten times its volume of 10% formal saline (this is supplied to the operating theatres, clinics and wards) in order to ensure adequate fixation.

To ensure patient safety, the specimen must be labelled with the patient's name, hospital number and date of birth and be accompanied by a request form with all details completed, including the signature of the requesting clinician and a location for the return of the report.

Failure to provide this information will result in the sample being delayed and it may be returned to the sender. Similarly, failure to provide adequate clinical information may mean that the scope of the specimen report is limited, as the reporting pathologist does not have all the facts of the case.

## 2. Turnaround times for Results

As a rule, small biopsies (e.g. needle and endoscopy specimens) fix rapidly and a result will usually be available within seven days of receipt. Larger specimens need to be fixed for two or three days before examination can begin, and as they are also more complex cases reports on these cases will normally take round ten days from receipt. More complicated cases requiring special investigations may also take longer to report.

Due to the need for decalcification as well as the diagnostic complexity, a histology result for Bone Marrow Trephines (BMTs) will usually be available within twenty days of receipt.

Please note that results from specimens that require decalcification will take longer than the stated turnaround times below. Special methods are required to ensure optimal results from these specimens and the delay will depend on the type of sample sent.

Cellular Pathology Published Histology Turnaround Times – See section 6.

Turnaround times are monitored on a monthly basis and outliers investigated.

### 3. Urgent Samples

If a clinically urgent result is required please contact a Consultant Histopathologist (via 01622 224051) and mark the request form 'Urgent'.

Red/orange stickers ('dots') **must** be attached to the specimen request forms for all patients on a "Cancer Pathway" to clearly identify these to the laboratory.

#### Frozen section samples

These must be pre-booked at least 48 hours in advance of any planned procedure (telephone 01622 224051). At the start of the procedure the department must be contacted again to confirm that the procedure is still required.

In the event of a frozen section being required unexpectedly the Histology department must be contacted immediately. The department will try to accommodate such requests although it should be noted that the availability equipment and appropriate staff cannot be assured if suitable notice is not provided and therefore impromptu frozen section request may not be possible.

Frozen section are not performed on high risk specimens

### 4. Samples not tested

Please note the Histology department does not offer specialised testing on the following:

- renal biopsies,
- muscle biopsies,
- neuropathology specimens (including nerve biopsies),
- ophthalmology specimens
- Samples requiring cytogenetics testing for birth defects

Such samples must be sent directly to the appropriate specialist centre by the clinician and it is advisable to seek the advice of the specialist centre in advance, particularly as such samples may need to be sent fresh.

### 5. Referred cases

Occasionally samples may be referred elsewhere for specialist testing or second opinion. On such occasions an interim report may be issued stating that the department is awaiting a report from the referral centre. Once a report is received back a supplementary report will be issued.

Laboratories accredited to ISO15189 are selected for testing purposes wherever possible. Cases may be sent for second opinion to an individual Consultant Histopathologist based upon their expertise and professional reputation

## 6. Sample requirements and turnaround times

Test	Specimen container	Additional Information	Turnaround Time (from receipt to report issue)	Request form type
Biopsy	Histology pot  60ml formalin container (ratio of 10:1)  Orange top container	Do not refrigerate, store at room temperature  Check expiry date for use.  Return containers to laboratory if expiry date has passed	7 days	Histology
Large specimens	Specimen container of suitable size containing 10% formal saline (ratio of 10:1)	Do not refrigerate, store at room temperature	10 days	Histology
Bone Marrow Trepines (BMT)	Histology pot  60ml formalin container (ratio of 10:1)  Orange top container	Do not refrigerate , store at room temperature  Check expiry date for use.  Return containers to laboratory if expiry date has passed	20 days	Histology
Frozen sections	Dry specimen container of a suitable size  (DO NOT place in formalin)	Send to laboratory as soon as possible.	30 minutes (verbal report)	Histology
Immunofluorescence (IMF)	Vial of Michel's media  (DO NOT place in formalin or send fresh)	Arrange with laboratory before sending.  Send as soon as possible	Up to 1 week (verbal report)	Histology

## 7. Factors affecting examination

- Legible and correct completion of request form (insufficient or incorrect information may result in a delayed report).
- Quality of tissue preservation. Samples must be placed into a container with at least five times its volume of 10% formal saline
- Temperature affects the rate of fixation. For best results samples should be fixed at room temperature (15-25°C).

## 8. Enquiries

If further advice or information is required please contact the department via the Histology office 01622 224051.