

Severn Pathology Infection Sciences Sample Quick Guide

This quick reference guide for commonly sent samples is part of Infection Sciences' commitment to improve patient care and environmental sustainability by attempting to reduce rejected specimens. Many specimens are rejected for testing due to the use of an incorrect specimen container. This could result in a delay in diagnosis and treatment for patients and leads to unnecessary waste and transport costs.

Please ensure all samples:

- Are correctly identified with NHS number/hospital number, DoB, name and site of sampling or specimen type.
- Contain correct clinical details including **FOREIGN TRAVEL**, antimicrobial therapy, sample date, and duration of illness (important for serology).
- Have their hazard risk included on all requests (**including foreign travel, contact with imported animals and consumption of unpasteurised milk and VHF risk assessment** <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/681c8640155568d3da1d2a44/vhf-risk-assessment-algorithm-october-2024-updated-may-2025.pdf> irrespective of test requested. This information is essential to ensure that the correct laboratory precautions are undertaken when processing specimens. Please contact the Infection Sciences Laboratory prior to sending samples in patients at risk of high risk organisms.

Please refer to the Infection Sciences Laboratory User manual for further information.

- Go in the correct coloured bag - **Blue for Infection Sciences**. Please ensure samples are not leaking and the lid is secure.
- For electronically requested specimens, attach barcode labels over the tube label, with the **top of the barcode placed directly below the tube lid**.

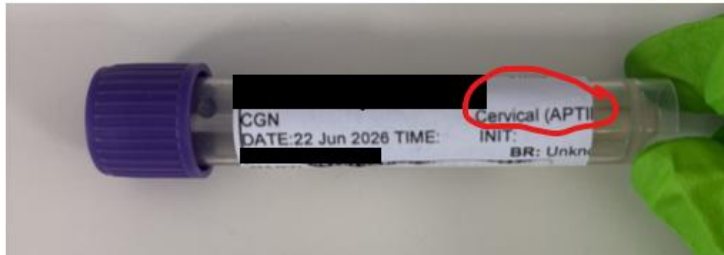


- For electronically requested specimens, attach the correct request barcode labels onto the correct container. This is particularly an issue with swabs:

DON'T

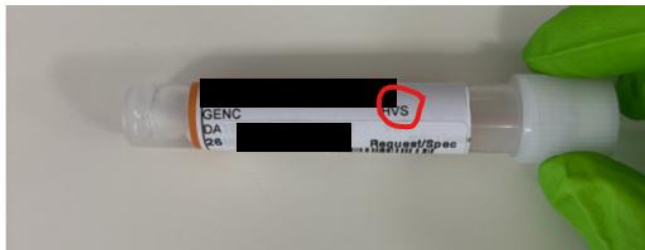
ICE label for APTIMA tube (APTIMA/NAAT) attached on a Bacteriology swab

– this will result in sample rejection



ICE label for Bacteriology swab (HVS) attached on an APTIMA tube

– this will result in sample rejection



To request testing kits and tubes please email

pathologyconsumablessouthmead@nbt.nhs.uk or order from pathology stores at

<https://www.nbt.nhs.uk/severn-pathology/requesting/consumables-ordering>

For any other queries or suggestions for improvements relating to the below please

email microbiology@nbt.nhs.uk or ISQuality@nbt.nhs.uk

For a full list of the Pathology testing repertoire including turnaround times please see

[Test Information | North Bristol NHS Trust \(nbt.nhs.uk\)](#)

Last updated July 2025

Blood cultures (Adults)	8-10mls blood in each bottle. Ideally 2 Sets of cultures should be obtained (other than line or infective endocarditis where separate recommendations are in place). Please do not cover up the barcode or QR code	
Blood culture (Paediatrics)	1-3mls blood Please do not cover up the barcode or QR code	
Swab for bacterial/ candida culture Ears/ eyes/ wounds/ nose/ throat/ high vaginal/ lower vaginal/ cervical/ self-taken	Purple top liquid swab *Please do NOT use APTIMA swab. Do NOT use for Chlamydia, Gonorrhoea, Trichomonas, M. genitalium, Bacterial Vaginosis NAAT send an Aptima tube (see below)	

**Chlamydia,
Gonorrhoea, Bacterial
Vaginosis, Trichomonas
and M. genitalium -
Aptima NAAT swab**

- Vaginal (all Aptima
STI NAAT tests)
- Male urethral
(Chlamydia,
Gonorrhoea,
M.genitalium)
- Rectal (Chlamydia,
Gonorrhoea only)
- Throat (Chlamydia,
Gonorrhoea only)
- Eye (not validated:
Chlamydia,
Gonorrhoea only)

- Endocervical
(Chlamydia,
Gonorrhoea,
Trichomonas)

Aptima Multitest swab. Please
check expiry date of kit.

***Please do NOT use Bacterial or
Viral swab**



Aptima Unisex swab for
Endocervical only. Please check
expiry date of kit.

***Please do NOT use Bacterial or
Viral swab**



Aptima Unisex Swab Kit

Chlamydia and Gonorrhoea, Trichomonas and M. genitalium - Aptima NAAT urine	Preferred sample for males. Please do not under/overfill. Sample should be between the two black lines indicated on the sample tube. Please check expiry date of tube.	
MRSA screen swab	Purple top sigma Transwab White top red/white sigma Duo Transwab If needing to screen urine, send boric acid container *Please do NOT use APTIMA or Red/Green top Viral swabs	 Order Details Σ-Transwab® MW176S NHS Supply Chain Code: HHD260  HHD271 Σ-Transwab® Duo MW167S
Carbapenemase screen (CPE) / VRE screen - rectal swab	MUST have faecal matter on the rectal swab otherwise cannot be process and will be rejected *Please do NOT use APTIMA or Red/Green top Viral swabs	

Respiratory - Viral Nose and/Throat swabs	Red top Copan tube Green top Universal Transport Medium (UTM) tube Purple top UTM tube White top UTM tube *Please do not use APTIMA swab	
Bordetella pertussis – Viral Nose and Throat swabs Nasopharyngeal swab for PCR Please see UKHSA for advice on testing Pertussis: guidelines for public health management - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)	Red top Copan tube Green top Universal Transport Medium (UTM) tube *Please do NOT use APTIMA swab	

Vesicular rash including Mpox - Vesicles/ Eyes/ Genital lesions	Red top Copan tube Green top Universal Transport Medium (UTM) tube *Please do NOT use APTIMA swab	
Measles PCR	If wanting to test in clinic, please discuss first with UKHSA to risk assess Red top Copan tube Green top universal transport medium (UTM) tube *Please do NOT use APTIMA swab Oral fluid testing - please contact UKHSA to request a kit 0300 3038162	
Mumps (oral fluid IgM /PCR) Acute cases only. For immunity testing please see viral serology below.	Oral fluid testing - please contact UKHSA to request a kit on 0300 3038162 If wanting to test in clinic, please discuss with Virology at Severn Infection Sciences to avoid delay	Kit must be obtained from UKHSA

Bacterial and viral enteric PCR / C. difficile PCR Viral gastroenteritis and Norovirus PCR Ova, cysts, & parasites (OCP) H pylori antigen – Stool	Blue topped with a scoop, minimum 1/3 full. Ideally separate samples for each ICE request sticker. Please post-date OCP samples with different days otherwise they may be rejected by the laboratory.	
Threadworm/ Enterobius kit	Rectal swab suspension	
CSF MC&S/ Biofire PCR/ CRAG antigen	Universal white top container	
Sputum for MC&S/ Virology PCR	Universal white top container	

Bronchoscopy for MC&S/ Virology PCR/ PCP PCR/ Aspergillus antigen	Universal white top container	
Tissue for MC&S/ Peritoneal dialysis fluid/ Pus sample	Universal white top container	
Urine MC&S if >2ml	Boric Acid container Olive Green/Red	
Urine MC&S if < 2ml i.e. paediatric samples	White top universal container N.B. If sample is >2ml this will be rejected by the laboratory	
Urine for Legionella antigen	White top universal container	

Blood for bacterial / viral serology e.g. Lyme/ CMV/ EBV/ Hepatitis/ HIV/ Varicella Zoster/ Measles	Gold top tube * Please do NOT send a green top tube as this will be rejected by the laboratory	
Blood for viral PCR / NAAT e.g. CMV/ EBV/ HIV Viral load/ Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C	Purple top EDTA tube	
Urine for CMV PCR / BKV PCR	White top universal container	
Antimicrobial assays except for Isoniazid (+ N-acetyl-Isoniazid) and Azoles	Gold top tube	
Isoniazid (+ N-acetyl-Isoniazid)	Grey top tube (fluoride oxalate; unspun whole blood)	

Azoles (itraconazole, posaconazole, voriconazole, isavuconazole, fluconazole)	Red top tube (plain clotted blood) Or Gold top tube[†] [†]If a gel tube is used, separate serum into a secondary tube as soon as possible as the gel may bind the analyte	
Blood for fungal markers, beta glucan/ Aspergillus antigen	Gold top tube	
Fungal skin/ nail scraping for microscopy and culture	Mycology collection kit *Please do NOT send blades	