



Specimen Collection Manual

For any questions or concerns, please contact Client Services by calling
(336) 609-6240 or emailing clientservices@balldermpath.com

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	4
PURPOSE	4
HOURS OF OPERATION	4
BUSINESS HOURS	4
CONTACTING BALL DERMPATH	4
CLIENT SERVICES	4
DERMATOPATHOLOGISTS	4
HEALTH AND SAFETY PRECAUTIONS	4
SPECIMEN HANDLING	5
TURN AROUND TIME	5
BIOPSIES	5
CULTURES	5
STAT/RUSH	5
SUPPLIES PROVIDED TO OFFICES	5
SUPPLIED UPON REQUEST	5
STORAGE BEFORE TESTING	6
PATIENT IDENTIFICATION	6
ACCEPTABLE IDENTIFIERS	6
SPECIMEN COLLECTION	6
ROUTINE BIOPSIES OR EXCISIONS	6
FRESH SPECIMENS (MODIFIED MOHS)	7
DIRECT IMMUNOFLOURESCENCE (DIF)	7
CULTURES	7
SWAB: FOR BACTERIAL CULTURE	7
SWAB: FOR VIRAL STUDIES* (HSV, VZV, CMV, EBV)	7
TISSUE: FOR AEROBIC BACTERIAL, FUNGAL, AND MYCOBACTERIAL CULTURE*	8
NAIL SCRAPE FOR DERMATOPHYTOSIS	8
SKIN SCRAPE/CLIPPING FOR DERMATOPHYTOSIS	8
HAIR PLUCK/SCRAPE FOR DERMATOPHYTOSIS	8
REQUISITION	10
PATIENT AUTHORIZATION	11
SPECIMEN LABELING	11
ACCEPTABLE IDENTIFIERS	11
PACKAGING FOR COURIER	12
CONDITIONS FOR TRANSPORTATION	12
BIOPSIES	12
CULTURES (WITH THE EXCEPTION OF VIRAL STUDIES)	12
VIRAL STUDIES	12
FRESH SPECIMENS	12
COURIER PICK-UP	12
PACKAGING FOR FEDEX	13
CONDITIONS FOR TRANSPORTATION	13

BIOPSIES	13
CULTURES (WITH THE EXCEPTION OF VIRAL STUDIES)	13
VIRAL STUDIES	13
FRESH SPECIMENS	13
FEDEx PICK-UP	13

Introduction

Purpose

At Ball Dermopath, PA, it is our mission to provide the highest level of service and the best in patient care.

Our laboratory accrediting agencies have strict guidelines for patient identity, specimen labeling, and submission. They also mandate rejection of improperly completed requisitions or incorrectly identified specimens. This Specimen Collection Manual is designed to help ensure that your patients' specimens are accepted for processing to provide you with timely and accurate diagnoses.

Hours of operation

The laboratory is operational 24 hours a day.

Business hours

Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm

Contacting Ball Dermopath

At Ball Dermopath all calls are answered by a live operator who will connect you directly to the person best suited to answer your questions.

Client Services

For any questions or concerns, please contact Client Services by calling **(336) 609-6240** or emailing **clientservices@balldermpath.com**

Dermatopathologists

Our dermatopathologists are available to referring physicians 24 hours a day. To contact a dermatopathologist call **(336) 609-6240** or toll free **(855) 246-4311**. Indicate to the receptionist that you are a provider and you will be connected directly to a dermatopathologist. If calling after hours, dial extension 7 and you will be connected to the on-call dermatopathologist.

Health and Safety Precautions

Use universal precautions when handling specimens containing blood or other potentially infectious material. Work areas contaminated with blood must be immediately disinfected with 10% bleach or other approved disinfectant. First aid includes washing skin with running water and soap, flushing nose or mouth with running water, and flushing eyes for 15 minutes with running water or sterile saline.

Specimen Handling

Specimens must be handled in a safe manner and according to applicable legal requirements or guidelines. Information on safe specimen handling may be obtained from the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Turn Around Time

Biopsies

Final reports for routine biopsies are generally issued 24-48 hours after the specimen arrives at the laboratory. Some specimens may involve further testing (histochemical stains, immunohistochemical stains, or deeper sections) which may require additional time.

Cultures

Cultures are referred out to an affiliate clinical lab. Based on incubation periods, turn around time will vary.

Stat/Rush

Stat/Rush cases receive top priority in the laboratory. Check the RUSH box on the requisition to indicate to the lab staff that the specimen requires special handling. Contact Client Services at **(336) 609-6240** for immediate pick-up. Results will be called to the submitting physician as soon as a diagnosis is available.

Supplies Provided to Offices

Ball DermPath, PA provides all of the following supplies. To order supplies, please contact Client Services at **(336) 609-6240** or **clientservices@balldermpath.com**.

- Requisitions
- Daily Manifests
- 20, 60, or 120ml pre-filled 10% neutral buffered formalin bottles (for routine biopsies)
- Michel's or Zeus pre-filled transport medium (for DIF studies)
- 10% neutral buffered formalin
- 6x9 biohazard bags
- 12x15 biohazard bags
- Bags for dry specimens such as nail clippings and hair samples

Supplied upon request

To request supplies please contact Client Services by calling **(336) 609-6240**.

- Bacterial swabs
 - SP Brand CultureSwab Swab (contains Stuart's media, for aerobic bacterial culture, also to be used with M4 transport media for viral culture. May be used for fungal and mycobacterial culture as well, although this is discouraged, see Specimen Collection below)
- M4 transport medium (for viral culture)

- Sterile wide mouth cups and sterile saline (for bacterial, fungal, and/or mycobacterial culture from tissue)
- Advanced Beneficiary Notice (ABN)
- FedEx shipping supplies
- Anaerobic transport system for tissue biopsies: (provided on an as needed basis)
- Sterile culture swabs

Storage before testing

All supplies should be stored at room temperature with the exception of the M4 transport medium. The M4 transport medium must be stored between 2° C and 8° C.

Patient Identification

Prior to specimen collection, the patient's identity must be confirmed by checking at least two identifiers.

Acceptable Identifiers

- Patient's name
- Date of birth
- Social Security Number

Specimen Collection

Ball Dermpath, PA performs tests only at the written or electronic request of an authorized provider. Specimens should be submitted to the lab in the correct medium to ensure they are processed in an accurate and timely manner. Ensure that each specimen container is clearly marked with at least **two unique** patient identifiers. Secure each specimen container tightly to avoid leakage in transit.

Routine Biopsies or Excisions

1. Perform excision, punch, or shave biopsy as appropriate.
2. Submit specimen in pre-filled 10% neutral buffered formalin bottle.
3. The size of the bottle should be a minimum of 10x the size of the specimen.
4. The specimen will be processed and stained with routine H&E; additional histochemical and immunohistochemical stains may then be ordered based on preliminary findings at the discretion of the pathologist.
5. If you would like us to perform a special stain, please indicate this on the requisition form; we may contact you to discuss this request further after review of the H&E.

Fresh Specimens (Modified Mohs)

Optimal methods would include:

1. Fresh tissue may be submitted in a petri dish between two pieces of sterile gauze, soaked in saline. Lid must be applied and taped shut. Refrigerate until specimen is picked up.

OR

2. Fresh tissue may be pinned to cork or foam board and submitted in 10% neutral buffered formalin.

***DO NOT** place fresh tissue in formalin unless it is pinned to cork or foam board.

*Please include a copy of the MOHS map with the specimen.

Contact Client Services at **(336) 609-6240** for immediate pick-up.

Direct Immunofluorescence (DIF)

1. A perilesional (within 1-2 cm) punch biopsy is generally the preferred specimen.
2. Submit in bottle containing Michel's fixative*: in Michel's, the specimen is good for up to 5 days when stored at room temperature.
3. Write DIF on the requisition to alert the lab of special handling.

If Michel's is not available, the specimen can be kept on normal saline and should be sent as soon as possible but may be kept refrigerated for up to 24 hours. **DO NOT place tissue in formalin.*

Cultures

If you are ordering cultures you must complete the "Other Laboratory Testing" section on the requisition. Select the study requested (bacterial, Acid Fast Bacilli (AFB), fungal, or viral studies).

Swab: For bacterial culture

1. Clean and irrigate the area as best as possible to reduce contamination.
2. Swab the area generously.
3. Store at room temperature and transport within 24 hours.

**Swabs for fungal and mycobacterial culture are discouraged as they result in extremely low yield. Instead, submission of tissue is preferred (see below). If it is not possible to obtain tissue, we recommend at least two swabs for fungal cultures; include another swab for any additional testing needed (e.g. bacterial culture).*

Swab: For viral studies* (HSV, VZV, CMV, EBV)

1. Clean the area as best as possible to reduce contamination.
2. Swab the area generously using the same swab as for aerobic bacterial culture (SP Brand Culture Swab).
3. Inoculate swab in M4 viral transport media by agitation (these vials of media should be kept refrigerated at all times, prior to and after collection).

4. After inoculating, break off the tip of the swab and leave in the media.
5. Store refrigerated and transport (cold) as soon as possible.

**Tissue samples rather than swabs can also be sent for viral culture; simply place the tissue into the vial of M4.*

Tissue: For Aerobic Bacterial, Fungal, and Mycobacterial Culture*

1. Collect tissue using biopsy technique.
2. Place in a sterile wide mouth container** with sterile saline to maintain moisture.
3. Store at room temperature and transport ideally within 1-2 hours. If you will be delayed more than a few hours, the specimen can be refrigerated for up to 24 hours. Delayed processing may reduce the yield of culture for *Histoplasma*, *Coccidioides* and *Blastomyces ssp.*

**Anaerobes require a special transport system and tissue for anaerobic culture should NOT be refrigerated. Anaerobic transport systems are not routinely provided. If you have taken tissue for anaerobic culture, please call Client Services at (336) 609- 6240 and one will be delivered by courier to your office. While waiting for the BDP courier to arrive with the special anaerobic transport system, tissue can be maintained at room temperature in a sterile wide mouth container containing sterile saline.*

***A wide mouth container is needed for easy retrieval in the lab. Tissues that are squeezed into the bottom of a narrow mouth container, such as a spare culture swab tube, are very difficult to retrieve and often become contaminated in the process.*

Nail Scrape for Dermatophytosis

1. Clean the nail with 70-95% alcohol.
2. Scrape the outermost layer with a scalpel and/or clip away a generous portion of the affected area and/or collect debris from under the nail.
3. Place in a dry* sterile container (nail bags provided).
4. Store at room temperature and transport within 24 hours.

**Dry specimens should be kept in dry conditions.*

Skin Scrape/Clipping for Dermatophytosis

1. Cleanse skin with 70-95% alcohol.
2. Collect epidermal scales: the border of the lesion tends to yield the best result.
3. Place in a dry* sterile container.
4. Store at room temperature and transport within 24 hours.

**Dry specimens should be kept in dry conditions.*

Hair Pluck/Scrape for Dermatophytosis

1. With forceps, collect 10-12 hairs (include the base of the shaft; cut hairs are not acceptable).
2. May also scrape the scalp, or submit contents of a plugged follicle or skin scales.

3. Place in a dry* sterile container.
4. Store at room temperature and transport within 24 hours.

**Dry specimens should be kept in dry conditions.*

Requisition

A requisition must be submitted for each patient. The requisition must include the patient's **full name, date of birth, and collection date** even if you are submitting a separate sheet for patient demographics. To ensure the laboratory has sufficient information, and to prevent delays in specimen processing, please include the following information with the specimen.

- Practice information
 - Authorizing provider's name
 - Authorizing provider's signature
 - Address
 - Telephone
 - Fax
- Patient demographic information
 - Patient's full name
 - Date of birth
 - Address
 - Phone number
- Patient insurance information (if the patient is self pay, please indicate so on the requisition)
- Type of biopsy
 - Shave
 - Punch
 - Excision
 - Clipping
 - Curettage
 - Modified Mohs
- Site of biopsy for each specimen
- Type of test requested
 - Routine
 - DIF (Direct Immunofluorescence)
 - Modified Mohs
- Indicate if the specimen is one of the following
 - Routine biopsy (no margins requested)
 - Biopsy margins requested
 - Excisional margins
- Source of biopsy
- Clinical impression
- Any pertinent patient history
 - *If the history is lengthy/complex, you may simply write "please call for history prior to sign out" and one of our pathologists will call for additional information

Place the paper requisition form and labeled specimen bottles in a 6x9 specimen bag. Gather specimen bags throughout the day and package them for courier pickup or FedEx shipment.

Patient Authorization

The patient's signature authorizes Ball Dermopath to release medical information to the insurance/health plan provider for processing of insurance claims. The patient's signature also authorizes the acceptance and responsibility for payment of charges not covered by insurance/health plan provider.

Specimen Labeling

All primary specimen containers must be labeled with **2 identifiers** at the time of collection. A 'primary' specimen container is the innermost container received by the laboratory that holds the specimen. Labels are provided on the requisitions.

Acceptable Identifiers Include:

- Patient name
- Date of birth
- Social Security number
- Requisition number

Packaging for Courier

To prepare the specimen for courier pick-up follow the instructions below:

- Collect all 6x9 specimen bags.
- Complete the daily manifest form by listing each patient's name and the number of bottles submitted for each patient.
- Sign and date the daily manifest.
- Place 6x9 biohazard bags into a 12x15 biohazard bag.
- Have the manifest and 12x15 biohazard bag ready for courier.
- The courier will verify, sign and date, and return the carbon copy of the daily manifest for your records.

Conditions for Transportation

Biopsies

Biopsies should be preserved using appropriately-sized neutral buffered formalin containers (refer to the specimen preservation section of this manual). Biopsies do not require refrigeration.

Cultures (with the exception of Viral Studies)

Cultures may be transported at room temperature.

Viral Studies

Viral studies **must** be refrigerated between 2° C and 8° C until transported. The courier will transport the culture in an insulated container along with an ice pack.

Fresh Specimens

Do not put in a bottle containing fixative. Keep specimen cool and contact Client Services at **(336) 609-6240** for immediate pick-up.

Courier Pick-up

For scheduled pick-ups, place the 12x15 specimen bag(s) in the designated area for courier pick-up.

For unscheduled pick-ups, contact Client Services at (336) 609-6240 or toll free at (855) 246-4311.

Packaging for FedEx

To prepare the specimen for FedEx pick-up follow the instructions below:

- Collect all 6x9 specimen bags.
- Complete the daily manifest form by listing each patient's name and the number of bottles submitted for each patient.
- Sign and date the daily manifest. (Retain the carbon copy for your records.)
- Place all 6x9 biohazard bags into a 12x15 biohazard bag.
- Place the daily manifest in the 12x15 biohazard bag.
- Place the 12x15 biohazard bag in the provided FedEx box.
- Use a pre-paid airbill (supplied by Ball Dermpath)

Conditions for Transportation

Biopsies

Biopsies should be preserved using appropriately-sized neutral buffered formalin containers (refer to the specimen preservation section of this manual). Biopsies do not require refrigeration.

Cultures (with the exception of Viral Studies)

Cultures may be transported at room temperature.

Viral Studies

Do not FedEx viral studies; contact Client Services at (336) 609-6240 to schedule a pick-up.

Fresh Specimens

Do not put in a bottle containing fixative. Do not FedEx fresh specimens; keep specimen cool and contact Client Services at (336) 609-6240 for immediate pick-up.

FedEx Pick-up

For scheduled pick-ups, place the FedEx box in the designated area for pick-up. For unscheduled pick-ups, contact Client Services at (336) 609-6240 or toll free at (855) 246-4311.