



Microbiology Specimen Storage Prior to Transport - New Protocol

Care with pre-analytical specimen management is critical to optimise accuracy, analysis and interpretation of laboratory results.

Currently LSR recommends that all swabs, fluids and sputa should be stored at ambient room temperature. The IDSA Guidelines "A Guide to Utilisation of the Microbiology Laboratory for Diagnosis of Infectious Diseases", recommends refrigeration for most Microbiology specimens prior to transport. LSR is modelling their protocols on these guidelines and would like to inform you of this change to our current recommended procedures.

Specimens that should be stored at refrigerator temperature until transport to the laboratory are as follows:

- All swabs, except vaginal swabs
- Urine
- Faeces
- Body fluids / aspirates
- Sputa
- FNA / Tissue samples

There are some exceptions and these specimens should be stored at ambient room temperature:

- Blood Cultures
- Vaginal swabs
- Chlamydia / Gonorrhoea NAAT tube
- Mycology skin scraping

In some instances, where there is no available specimen fridge, room temperature storage is still acceptable if samples are collected and transported to the laboratory within 24 to 48 hours. The exception is urine specimens that **MUST** be refrigerated if they are not in the laboratory within 2 hours of collection.

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CLINICAL UPDATE