



# SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY Public Health Laboratory

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## SPECIMEN COLLECTION & TRANSPORT INSTRUCTIONS

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### Herpes Virus Culture

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#### Specimen Collection Procedure for Herpes virus Culture

##### I. Specimen Collection:

The selection, collection, transport, and assessment of specimens is critical for successful viral culture. Collect appropriate specimens from symptomatic patients using accepted sample collection methods. Collect specimen as soon as possible after illness onset.

Use Dacron or rayon tipped swabs with plastic or aluminum shafts; do not use cotton, calcium alginate, or wooden shaft swabs. Collect specimens as aseptically as possible from early stage lesions rather than ulcerative or crusted lesions. Prior to specimen collection, patients should avoid topical treatments such as creams, lotions, ice, alcohol, vaginal sprays, and sitz baths as these may reduce virus yield.

##### A. Lesion Swab Specimens:

- Wipe vesicle with saline. Disrupt vesicle, and collect fluid with swab. With same swab, collect cells from the base of the lesion. For non-vesicular lesions, collect cells from base of the lesion by using a swab pre-moistened with saline. Place swab into viral transport medium (VTM).

##### B. Other Acceptable Specimens:

- CSF, cervical swab, mucosal swab, conjunctival swab, corneal or conjunctival scraping.

##### C. **A Positive Herpes Culture will automatically reflex for testing for DFA Typing Confirmation.**

##### II. Rejection Criteria:

- Swabs with calcium alginate, or cotton tips or wooden shafts.
- Specimen was not received within 72 hours of collection and/or was not refrigerated at 2-8°C after collection.
- Unlabeled or mislabeled specimens.
- Specimen containers that are broken and/or leaking.
- Specimen received in expired viral transport medium.

##### IV. Storage of Clinical Specimens:

If specimen can not be sent to the laboratory immediately, it may be held at 2-8°C for up to 72 hours until transport to the laboratory.

##### V. Shipping of Clinical Specimens:

Clinical specimens should be shipped on wet ice or cold packs in appropriate packaging.

##### VI. Transport

Transport specimen on ice in a cooler or chest with ice pack.