

IC8:SCABIES SKIN SCRAPINGS

Sample Type

Skin scrapings

Sample Container

Scabies collection kit is available from hospital's microbiology department or local laboratory

Collection Instructions

Obtain scabies collection kit from the laboratory and refer to the instructions in the kit.

Supplies needed:

- Sterile scalpel blade (a #15 works well) or fine sterile needle
- Mineral oil and plastic pipette or dropper
- Alcohol pads
- Gauze sponges
- Frosted glass slides and glass cover slips
- Band-aids
- Slide container
- Nail cleaners (optional)
- Pencil to label slides with resident's name and birthdate or hospital number
- A bright light or magnifying glass

Collection Procedure:

- With pencil, label slide(s) with resident name, date of birth, hospital number etc.
- Perform hand hygiene with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR)
- Wear gown, gloves and other personal protective equipment based on point of care risk assessment

- Examine skin for several intact fresh burrows to scape, i.e., finger webs, wrist creases, groin, trunk, buttock creases, etc.

“Helpful hints about Burrows”

- Avoid burrows that the resident has been scratching
- A bright light or magnifying glass may be helpful for visualization
- The burrows may also be highlighted with mineral oil or a dart felt pen. If the felt pen is used, wipe off excess ink with an alcohol swab as the burrows will retain the ink.
- Obtain the samples from the leading edge of the lesions as that is where the adult mite is located

Method A (using blade)

- a. Place drop of mineral oil on slide and on skin lesion.
- b. Stretch skin slightly with one hand.
- c. Scrape lesions with blade to obtain superficial skin material; a small amount of bleeding may occur. It is sometimes useful to clean debris from under the fingernails for examination.
- d. Transfer scrapings to a glass slide by tapping the blade in the oil on the slide; cover specimen with a cover slip.
- e. Place slide(s) in slide container and transport to the laboratory for microscopic examination.
- f. Remove PPE and perform hand hygiene.
- g. Document the procedure in resident’s record

Method B (using needle)

- a) Place drop of mineral oil on slide and on skin lesion.
- b) Stretch skin slightly with one hand.
- c) Using a fine sterile needle, poke under the burrow removing a small amount of material.
- d) Transfer material to slide and cover with a cover slip.
- e) Place slide(s) in slide container and transport to the laboratory for microscopic examination

- f) Dispose of blade/needle in sharps container and dispose other supplies into bio-hazard waste container.
- g) Remove PPE and perform hand hygiene.
- h) Document the procedure in resident's record

Summary

Scrapings are best performed at the end of the burrows in non-excoriated and non-inflamed areas using a sterile scalpel blade containing a drop of mineral oil. The mineral oil enhances the adherence of the mites to the blade and can then be transferred to a glass slide.

An additional 1-2 drops of mineral oil can be added to the slide if needed

References:

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