

Quick Sheet: Collecting a Nasopharyngeal Specimen for Culture: Swab Method

Source: Clinical Skills - Elsevier Performance Manager

ALERT

Do not attempt to collect a throat specimen for culture if acute epiglottitis is suspected because trauma from the swab may cause increased edema resulting in airway occlusion.

Collect nasopharyngeal specimens within 3 days of symptom onset if possible but no later than 7 days of symptom onset and before the start of antimicrobial therapy.

Assessment:

1. Perform hand hygiene before patient contact.
2. Introduce yourself to the patient.
3. Verify the correct patient using two identifiers.
4. Assess the patient's understanding of the purpose of the procedure and his or her ability to cooperate.
5. Assess the nasal mucosa and sinuses and observe for any drainage.
6. Determine if the patient experiences postnasal drip, sinus headache or tenderness, nasal congestion, or sore throat or if he or she has been exposed to others with similar symptoms.
7. Assess the condition of the posterior pharynx.
8. Assess the patient for systemic signs of infection.
9. Review the practitioner's orders to determine if a nasal specimen, throat specimen, or both are needed.
10. Plan to collect the specimen before mealtime to avoid contamination.
11. Obtain assistance for collecting throat specimens from confused, combative, or unconscious patients.

Quick Sheet: Collecting a Nasopharyngeal Specimen for Culture: Swab Method

Source: Clinical Skills - Elsevier Performance Manager

Collecting a Nasopharyngeal Specimen for Culture: Swab Method

1. Perform hand hygiene and don gloves.
2. Introduce yourself to the patient.
3. Verify the correct patient using two identifiers.
4. Explain the procedure to the patient and ensure that he or she agrees to treatment.
5. Instruct the patient to sit erect in bed or in a chair facing the nurse. A patient who is acutely ill or a young child may lie back against the bed with the head of the bed raised.
6. Have the nasopharyngeal swab (on flexible wire) and the culture tube ready for use. If using a prepackaged culture swab in a tube, loosen the top so the swab can be removed easily.



7. Gently advance the swab to the nasopharynx until resistance is met.
8. Roll the swab and allow it to remain in place for several seconds.



Source: https://point-of-care.elsevierperformancemanager.com/skills/434/quick-sheet?skillId=GN_43_7

Clinical Skills Elsevier

Adapted for FH AL Services 23 Mar 2020

Quick Sheet: Collecting a Nasopharyngeal Specimen for Culture: Swab Method

Source: Clinical Skills - Elsevier Performance Manager

9. Insert the swab into the culture tube and push the tip into the liquid medium at the bottom of the tube.
10. Place the top securely on the culture tube.
11. Offer the patient a facial tissue to blow his or her nose if needed.
12. In the presence of the patient, label the specimen per the organization's practice.
13. Prepare the specimen for transport.
 - a. Place the labeled specimen in a biohazard bag.
 - b. Record on the laboratory requisition if the patient is taking an antibiotic or if a specific organism is suspected.
14. Immediately transport the specimen to the laboratory.
15. Assess, treat, and reassess pain.
16. Discard supplies, remove gloves, and perform hand hygiene.
17. Document the procedure in the patient's record.

Quick Sheet: Collecting a Nasopharyngeal Specimen for Culture: Swab Method

Source: Clinical Skills - Elsevier Performance Manager

Quiz Questions:

1. Which is the correct way to place the swab into a commercially prepared culture tube?

- Place the swab into the culture tube and add a special reagent to the tube.
- Place the swab into the tube, close it securely, and keep it warm until it is sent to the laboratory.
- Take the swab and mix it in the reagent to check for color changes.
- Push the tip of the swab into the liquid medium at the bottom of the tube.

2. When acute epiglottitis is suspected in a patient, what should a nurse do?

- Collect a throat specimen for culture.
- Refrain from collecting a specimen for culture.
- Collect a nose specimen for culture.
- Collect a nasopharyngeal specimen for culture.

3. Which statement describes a difference between collecting a specimen for a nasal culture and collecting a specimen for a nasopharyngeal culture?

- Specimen collection for a nasopharyngeal culture causes more bleeding than specimen collection for a nasal culture.
- A nasopharyngeal swab is flexed upward to reach the nasopharynx through the mouth, and the nasal swab goes through the nose.
- The nasopharyngeal specimen is placed on ice to preserve the organisms, and a nasal culture specimen is not.
- The specimen for a nasopharyngeal culture is obtained with a swab on a flexible wire, and a nasal swab does not contain a wire.

4. A patient comes into the emergency department complaining of nasopharyngeal symptoms for 3 days. Which action should the health care team take next?

- Tell the patient to go home and rest.
- Tell the patient it is too soon to collect a nasopharyngeal specimen.
- Collect a nasopharyngeal specimen.
- Tell the patient it is past the time when they can collect a nasopharyngeal specimen.