



**Purpose:** To define the acceptability criteria for Cytology specimens.

**Specimen requirements:**

Any specimen received by non-Cytology staff must be taken to the Cytology department as soon as possible. A Cytology specimen is generally accompanied by a Cytology requisition. All specimens should be dropped off to Cytology or Histology staff. If a Cytology specimen is received after hours, it should be placed in the Histology refrigerator on the bottom shelf and the requisition placed in the basket hanging on the right side of the refrigerator.

1. Labeling Requirements for Cytology Specimens and Requisitions:

- Patient's name
- Patient MRN number or DOB
- Time and Date of collection
- Specimen identity (type) or source
- Surgeon, last **and** first name (on requisition only)
- Relevant clinical information (on requisition only)

2. If a glass slide is the specimen: last name (and preferably first initial) and DOB or MRN of the patient written with a solvent resistant pen or label. These can be obtained from the laboratory at the physician office's request.

3. Medico-Legal Specimens (eg, Specimens from Sexual Assault Victims, Alleged Rape, etc.)

- Chain of custody form will be initiated and filled out for each specimen in accordance with the "Specimen Handling-Chain of Custody Protocol" procedure.

4. Criteria for Rejection of Specimens

- All rejections must be called to the physician and documented on the rejected specimen notification, which is also faxed to the physician office. Pap smears that are unlabeled or mislabeled are rejected and not accessioned. It is up to the discretion of the laboratory as to which samples will be rejected.
- A majority of Non-Gyn specimens will not be rejected as they are not collectable samples. The Specimen Label Verification form will be used for documentation of specimens that are received with the incorrect labeling. Physician office staff may be required to come to the laboratory and label a specimen depending on the severity of mislabeling.
- Unacceptable specimens may be processed at the discretion of the pathologist, especially if the specimen cannot be easily recollected.

5. Gynecologic Smears

- Liquid-based SurePath brand paps are the only paps that are accepted by the laboratory. Collection brushes and/or spatulas should be left in the SurePath container. Pap collection kits are provided by the laboratory at the request of the Physician.
- HPV orders can be added on to Pap smear orders for up to 14 days after collection.



6. Non-Gynecologic Smears

- Smears that have been fixed with one of the following:
  - Alcohol-based spray fixative
  - 95% ethanol
  - 5% acetic acid and 95% ethanol
  - Air-dried slides
  
- Slides not received in an ethanol-based fixative must be labeled to indicate if they are spray-fixed or air dried. The fixation of a slide will indicate to the cytology staff which stain line to use.

7. Non-Gynecologic specimens

- Specimen should be refrigerated between 2° – 8° C.
  
- For specimens with multiple sites, a new cytology requisition needs to be filled out for each specimen site. All passes for that site can go on the same requisition.
  
- Testing is to be performed on Cytology specimens within 7 days of collection. After 7 days, the specimens are transferred to the discard area. Vulvar and Anal-rectal paps are an exception as they are kept for 30 days.
  
- It is preferable that specimens are collected fresh, with no fixative or additive and brought to the laboratory immediately following collection. EBUS specimens are an exception as they are sent to the lab in a Cytolyt solution.
  
- If flow cytometry, pneumocystis staining or a urine hemosiderin evaluation is requested, the specimen should be accompanied by a cytology requisition that includes the correct labeling requirements and the request for testing in the comments. Flow cytometry includes CD4/CD8 testing.
  
- All cytology specimens will be processed by Cytology staff between the hours of 0700 and 1600 Monday through Friday. **NOTE: CSF and 24 hour read specimens will be processed on weekends by available staff as needed.**
  
- Tzanck smears are collected by the physician by using a lancet to un-roof the vesicle. Touch a glass slide to the vesicle, with the frosted (labeled) side toward the vesicle. Immediately spray fix the slide with cytology spray fixative and indicate on the cytology requisition that the slides were spray fixed. If the slides were allowed to air-dry instead, indicate that on the requisition. Slide and requisition must be properly labeled according to the previous labeling requirements.
  
- Anal-Rectal Pap and HPV specimens require a special collection kit. More detailed collection instructions and the collection kits can be obtained by contacting the St. Luke’s Cytology Department.