Lab Dept: Microbiology

Test Name: GENITAL CULTURE, ROUTINE

**General Information**

**Lab Order Codes:** GENC

**Synonyms:** Culture, Genital (Routine); Culture, Cervix; Culture, Urethra; Culture, Vagina

**CPT Codes:**
- 87070 – Culture, bacterial; any other source except urine, blood or stool, with isolation and presumptive identification of isolates
- 87077 – Aerobic isolate, additional methods required for definitive identification, each isolate (if appropriate)
- 87185 – Enzyme detection (e.g., beta lactamase), per enzyme (if appropriate)
- 87147 – Culture, typing; immunologic method, other than immunofluorescence (e.g., agglutination grouping), per antiserum (if appropriate)
- 87206 – Smear, fluorescent and/or acid fast stain for bacteria, fungi, parasites, viruses or cell types (if appropriate)

The following testing may be added if appropriate based on findings for organism identification (multiple additions are possible if more than one organism is identified).

**Test Includes:** Culture of aerobic flora including *N. gonorrhoeae*, *N. meningitidis*, group A and B streptococci, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Haemophilus influenzae*, *Gardnerella vaginalis*, *Listeria monocytogenes*, *Candida* sp., *Salmonella* sp., *Shigella* sp., and *E. coli* in pure culture.

Gram stain is not included with this test. A Gram stain will be performed if specifically requested with an additional charge.

**Logistics**

**Lab Testing Sections:** Microbiology

**Phone Numbers:**
- MIN Lab: 612-813-5866
- STP Lab: 651-220-6555

**Test Availability:** Daily, 24 hours

**Turnaround Time:** Results are reported within 3 days.
Special Instructions: Specimen site and date/time of collection are required for processing.

Specimen

Specimen Type: Swab, aspiration, or drainage

Container:
- Swab transport medium
- Sterile container

Collection:

Females:

Cervix

1. Remove mucus and secretions from the cervix with a swab and discard.
2. With a new sterile swab, firmly sample the endocervical canal.
3. Place in swab culturette.

Vagina

1. Wipe away excessive amount of secretion or discharge.
2. Obtain secretions from mucosal membrane of the vaginal vault with a sterile swab.
3. If smear is also requested, collect a second swab.
4. Place swab in culturette.

Males:

Urethra

1. Insert an urethrogenital swab 2 to 4 cm into the urethral lumen, rotate swab.
2. Leave in place for at least 2 seconds to facilitate absorption.
3. Place swab in culturette.

Transport/Storage:

Onsite collections: Transport to the Microbiology Laboratory immediately. Do not refrigerate. Refrigeration may prevent the recovery of *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*.

Offsite collections: Do not refrigerate, store at room temperature. Specimens must be promptly transported to the laboratory, with the next available courier, not to exceed 24 hours from the time of collection. However, delayed transport causes a delay of test results.

Sample Rejection:

Improperly labeled specimen; specimens with prolonged transit time (see Transport/Storage for requirements); specimens not submitted in appropriate transport container; insufficient volume; external contamination. If an unacceptable specimen is received, the physician or nursing station will be notified and another specimen will be requested before the specimen is discarded.
**Interpretive**

**Reference Range:**
- Normal vaginal flora (females)
- Normal skin flora (males)

See **Additional Information** for a list of normal flora.

**Alert Value:**
If *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*, *Listeria*, *Salmonella* or *Shigella* are isolated, results will be called to the physician or patient’s nurse.

**Limitations:**
Herpes simplex virus, *Chlamydia*, and *Ureaplasma urealyticum* are **not** recovered by this procedure. Refer to separate listings.

**Methodology:**
Aerobic culture with selective (Thayer-Martin) and nonselective media.

**Additional Information:**
Normal vaginal flora includes lactobacilli, corynebacteria, enteric Gram negative rods, enterococci, alpha and gamma streptococci, coagulase-negative staphylococci, and anaerobes.

The male urethra contains organisms found on the skin, such as coagulase-negative staphylococci, micrococci, corynebacteria, alpha and gamma streptococci.

**References:**


**Updates:**
- 3/24/2010: CPT Updates
- 3/7/2011: CPT Updates
- 11/20/2014: Offsite information added.
- 7/8/2016: Direct inoculation procedure removed.