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**Lab Dept:** Microbiology/Virology

**Test Name:** SKIN/SUPERFICIAL WOUND/ LESION CULTURE AND GRAM STAIN

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**General Information**

**Lab Order Codes:** SKIC

**Synonyms:** Culture, Skin; Culture, Superficial Lesion; Superficial Lesion Culture; Wound, Superficial/skin

**CPT Codes:** 87070 – Culture, bacterial; any other source except urine, blood or stool, with isolation and presumptive identification of isolates  
87205 – Smear, primary source with interpretation; Gram or Giemsa stain for bacteria, fungi or cell types

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) and to aid in patient treatment management.

87077 – Aerobic isolate, additional methods required for definitive identification, each isolate (if appropriate)  
87106 – Culture, fungi, definitive identification, each organism, yeast (if appropriate)  
87107 – Culture, mold, definitive identification, each organism, mold (if appropriate)  
87206 – Smear, primary source with interpretation, fluorescent and/or acid fast stain for bacteria, fungi or cell types (if appropriate)  
87184 – Susceptibility studies, disk method, per plate (if appropriate)  
87185 – Enzyme detection (eg, beta lactamase), per enzyme (if appropriate)  
87186 – Susceptibility studies, microdilution or agar dilution, each multi-antimicrobial, per plate (if appropriate)

**Test Includes:** Culture of aerobic flora and Gram stain. Useful for the isolation of organisms associated with pyoderma (e.g., *Staphylococcus aureus* and group A *Streptococcus*).

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**Logistics**

**Lab Testing Sections:** Microbiology

**Phone Numbers:** MIN Lab: 612-813-5866

STP Lab: 651-220-6555

**Test Availability:** Daily, 24 hours

**Turnaround Time:** Preliminary report available at 1 day, final report within 2 - 5 days.

**Special Instructions:**

- **Specimen site** and **date/time of collection** are required for processing.
- If a *Mycobacterium* species (AFB, TB), fungus or a virus is suspected, refer to [AFB Culture](#), [Fungal Culture](#) or [Viral Culture](#).

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### ***Specimen***

**Specimen Type:** Skin, swab or scraping, or lesion

**Container:** Swab transport system

**Collection:**

1. Gently swab affected area or active border of a lesion.
2. Place swab in transport medium.

**Transport/Storage:** **Onsite collections:** Transport to the Microbiology Laboratory immediately.

**Offsite collections:** Refrigerate specimen. 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 a prolonged transit time (see [Transport/Storage](#) for requirements); 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.

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### ***Interpretive***

**Reference Range:** Normal skin flora

**Critical Value:** If any acid-fast bacilli is isolated, the result will be called to the physician or patient's nurse.

**Alert Value:**

- Gram-negative rods identified as ESBL or Carbapenemase producers will be called to the physician or patient's nurse. Infection Prevention will be notified.
- If MRSA is isolated for the first time, and the patient location is not Emergency department, the result will be called to the physician or patient's nurse.
- Any culture positive for potential agents of Bioterrorism – *Bacillus anthracis*, *Brucella*, *Bukholderia mallei/pseudomallei*, *Francisella tularensis*, or *Yersinia pestis* will be called to Infectious Disease or Infection Prevention.

**Methodology:** Culture

**References:**

Cook, JH, and M Pezzlo (1992). Specimen receipt and accessioning. Section 1. Aerobic bacteriology, 1.2.1-4. In HD Isenberg (ed) Clinical Microbiology Procedures Handbook. American Society for Microbiology, Washington DC

Miller, J Michael (1999) A Guide To Specimen Management in Clinical Microbiology, American Society for Microbiology, Washington DC

Miller, J Michael, and HT Holmes (1999) Specimen Collection, Transport, and Storage In PR Murray et al, (ed), Manual of Clinical Microbiology, 7th edition, American Society for Microbiology, Washington DC, pp 33-104

**Updates:**

3/22/2010: CPT Update

3/7/2011: CPT Update

4/25/2012: Addition of Critical Value

6/20/2012: Addition of Alert Value

1/20/2014: Updated name to include Superficial Wound

11/20/2014: Addition of offsite collection information