

**A. Select affected** skin, hair, or nails for laboratory evaluation.

**B. Collection**

**1. Materials**

- a. Forceps
- b. Scalpel
- c. 70% alcohol for disinfection
- d. Sterile plastic tube or container, envelope, or 2 glass slides
- e. Gauze
- f. Wood's lamp

**2. Method**

- a. **Skin.** Clean the skin surface with 70% alcohol. Scrape the surface of the skin at the *active margin* of the lesion and remove superficial material. Do not draw blood when scraping the skin. Place the scraping in a clean envelope, sterile plastic tube or container, or between two glass slides which should then be taped together.
- b. **Hair.** Remove at least 10 to 12 affected hairs with forceps. Place them in a clean tube or small envelope. Do not use stopper tubes because moisture accumulation may contaminate the specimen. Select the hairs that fluoresce under a Wood's lamp.
- c. **Nails.** Remove nail polish if present from the nail to be sampled. Wipe the nail with 70% alcohol on gauze (not cotton). Collect debris from *under* the nail and place it in a clean envelope or plastic tube. Scrape the *outer* surface of the nail and discard the scraping. Collect scrapings from the *deeper*, diseased areas of the nail and add them to the material previously collected from under the nail.

**C. Label** the specimen with patient information – full first and last names and one other identifier.

**D. Transport** – Do not refrigerate the specimen. Transport at room temperature.

**E. Comments** –

1. KOH results are available next day. Cultures are held 4 weeks.
2. Always sample the periphery of a skin lesion.
3. Swabs are not recommended for collecting fungal specimens.