PARKVIEW HEALTH LABORATORIES
TRUSTED CARE

Wound Culture Collections

- With sterile forceps, remove the dressing to expose the wound. Dispose of the soiled dressings properly.
- Visually examine the wound for exudate pus or fluid. If fluid is present, proceed with collection. If wound is dry, without evidence of fluid or pus, press the wound gently with sterile gauze. Fluid may be expressed to the surface.
- Cleanse the area around the wound with an alcohol or iodine pad to reduce the risk of contaminating the specimen with skin bacteria.
- For an aerobic culture, use a sterile cotton-tipped swab to collect as much exudate as possible or insert the swab deeply into the wound. Gently rotate it. Remove the swab from the wound and immediately place in aerobic culture tube. Label and send to Laboratory immediately. Never collect exudate from the skin and then insert the same swab into the wound. This could contaminate the wound with skin bacteria.
- Multiple sites of the wound may be sampled with the same swab or the physician may direct that multiple swabs be used depending on the appearance of the wound.
- For an anaerobic culture, insert the sterile cotton-tipped swab deeply into the wound, rotate it gently and remove it. Immediately place it in the anaerobic culture tube.
- Or insert a sterile 10-ml syringe without a needle into the wound. Aspirate 1-5 mls of exudate into the syringe. Attach 21 gauge needle to syringe. Immediately inject the aspirate into the anaerobic culture tube. If an anaerobic culture tube is unavailable, fluids may be placed in a sterile red top vacutainer tube. A specimen received in a syringe with a needle attached will not be accepted. A capped syringe with no attached needle will be accepted.
- Note: Aerobic swabs are used to collect specimens from surface sites such as eyes, ears, nares, throat, and boils. (Liquid in bottom of swab). Anaerobic swabs are used to collect specimens from deep wound/sterile fluid anaerobic sites (Gel in bottom of swab).
- Note: Aerobic cultures may be done from an anaerobic swab. Anaerobic cultures may not be done from an aerobic swab. All specimens should be sent to Laboratory immediately.