# Throat Swab Culture

**Test: Culture and Sensitivity (C&S)**

**Related investigations:** Chlamydia Investigations (Non-Genital Sites); Neisseria gonorrhoeae Culture; Virology Molecular Investigations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specimen type</th>
<th>Throat swabs, posterior pharyngeal swabs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Container</td>
<td>Sterile, individually wrapped rayon tipped swab with a semi-solid transport medium. All swabs used should be CE marked and meet the Clinical Laboratory Standard Institute approved standard M40-A2 (2014).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Volume / quantity requirements</td>
<td>Not applicable – see instructions below.</td>
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**Optimal time and method of collection**
- Use aseptic technique
- Prior to starting antibiotics where possible
- Swab should be taken from the tonsillar area and/or posterior pharynx taking care to avoid the tongue and uvula (use of a tongue depressor or spatula may help)
- Place the swab into the transport medium immediately after swabbing

**Transportation**
- Place the labelled swab inside a sealed plastic bag attached to a correctly filled in microbiology request form.
- Transport the specimen to the Microbiology Department at UHND as soon as possible.
- For general transportation information refer to the transport page.

**Storage**
Specimens that cannot be transported or processed immediately should be refrigerated (2-8°C)

**Special considerations and limitations**
- Throat swabs should not be attempted if the epiglottis is inflamed as sampling may cause serious respiratory obstruction
- If diphtheria is suspected then please contact Public Health England

**Relevant clinical information**
- State the symptoms and any presumptive clinical diagnosis
- State if the symptoms are persistent including the length of time
- State if *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* infection is suspected
- State if Candida infection is suspected
- State if the patient is immunocompromised
- Please include details of recent, current or proposed antibiotic therapy

**Consent information**
Healthcare professionals: follow local procedures for obtaining consent from patients.

**Biological reference intervals and clinical decision values**
Interpretation of results and reporting depends upon many factors including; the clinical information given with the request, growth of normal flora, growth of potential pathogens, etc.
If clinical details suggest potential infection with Fusobacterium species then extended culture will be performed in addition to routine culture. The report will reflect this.

**Availability of testing**
Swabs are processed 7 days a week during routine laboratory hours. Urgent requests are not applicable for this investigation.

**Measured turnaround time**
Refer to the Microbiology Turnaround Times page for current information.

**Information for patients**
Information on this page is intended for clinical staff. Please refer to your healthcare professional if you have any queries regarding your test or visit the NHS Choices website (www.nhs.uk).