

Surgical Pathology (Tissue) Specimen Collection Guidelines



Most tissue samples should be preserved and transported in 10% neutral buffered formalin to avoid cellular degeneration. However, certain tissue or biopsy types require special handling techniques and should not be placed directly in formalin. Please see the special instructions below for any of the following tissue types:

- Lymph node or other tissue for flow cytometry or lymphoma work-up
- Breast excisional biopsies or resections
- Frozen section
- Bone marrow aspirate or biopsy
- Tissue for cytogenetic studies or flow cytometry
- Muscle or nerve biopsy
- Medical renal biopsy

General Surgical Pathology Specimens

1. Immediately place tissue into an appropriately sized specimen container with at least an equal volume of 10% neutral buffered formalin. Make sure the container is tightly sealed and does not leak.
2. Properly label the specimen container at the bedside with the patient's name, a second unique patient identifier (date of birth or medical record number), and the source of the specimen. The two unique patient identifiers must match the identifiers on the accompanying requisition.
3. If multiple specimens are to be examined and diagnosed individually, each specimen must be submitted in a separate container labeled with the two unique patient identifiers and the specific specimen site.
4. **Complete the pathology test requisition** under the supervision of the ordering physician with the following information:
 - a. Patient's full name. Note of any recent name change is also helpful for retrieving previous patient records.
 - b. Patient's date of birth.
 - c. Patient's medical record number.
 - d. Source and type of specimen. Properly identify the specimen by listing **WHAT** the specimen is (mass, tumor, bone, etc.) and **WHERE** it was obtained (anatomical site including LEFT or RIGHT if applicable).
 - e. Ordering clinician and submitting facility.
 - f. Date and time of specimen collection.
 - g. Clinical history relating to the submitted specimen (pre-operative and post-operative diagnoses).
 - h. For breast specimens, the time of removal of the tissue and the time of tissue immersion in fixative.
 - i. For fetus or products of conception greater than 12 weeks, Consent for Final Disposition should be attached to the Test Requisition.
5. Attach to the requisition the patient's demographic and insurance information sheet and completed Advanced Beneficiary Notice, if applicable.

Contact Us

If you have any questions or need more information, contact Histology at Pathology Services Laboratory by phone at 479-968-6781 or 1-800-874-4904 or by email at PSLab@pathologyserviceslab.com.

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6. Place the specimen/s in a biohazard bag and the requisition in the outside pocket of the bag.
7. Seal the bag and place it in the designated courier pickup area.

Lymph Node or Other Tissue for Flow Cytometry or Lymphoma Work-Up:

1. Notify Pathology Services Laboratory (479-968-6781) prior to specimen collection that you will have a specimen for flow cytometry.
2. Have the surgeon place a small portion (0.5 to 1.0 cm³) of the involved lymph node or diseased tissue into a container of RPMI tissue transport media.
3. Place the remainder of the lymph node or tissue in a container of 10% neutral buffered formalin.
4. Properly label the specimen containers at the bedside with the patient's name, a second unique patient identifier (date of birth or medical record number), and the source of the specimen.
5. Place the RPMI transport tube in a biohazard bag and refrigerate until courier pickup.
6. Place the formalin container in a biohazard bag and seal.
7. Complete the pathology test requisition as detailed above for general specimens. Attach to the requisition, the patient's demographic and insurance information sheet and completed Advanced Beneficiary Notice, if applicable.
8. Place the requisition with attached demographic sheet in the outside pocket of the sealed bag.
9. Notify Pathology Services Laboratory (479-968-6781) that the specimen is ready for pickup.
10. On arrival of the courier, remove the RPMI container from the refrigerator and place in the biohazard bag.

Breast Excisional Biopsy or Resection

1. Immediately place the tissue into an appropriately sized specimen container with at least an equal volume of 10% neutral buffered formalin. Make sure the container is tightly sealed and does not leak.
2. If delivery of an excisional biopsy or resection specimen to Pathology Services Laboratory will be delayed (e.g. specimen from remote site, specimen collected after courier pickup for the day), the surgeon may separately submit the margins or ink the margins, and then bisect the tumor prior to immersion in formalin. If this is done, the margins for evaluation must be clearly defined and documented on the pathology requisition to prevent erroneous results.
3. The time of removal of the tissue and the time of immersion of the tissue in fixative should be recorded and submitted to the laboratory. All specimens should be immersed in formalin within 1 hour of the biopsy or resection procedure.
4. Properly label the specimen containers at the bedside with the patient's name, a second unique patient identifier (date of birth or medical record number), and the source of the specimen.
5. Place the specimen container in a biohazard bag and seal.

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6. Complete the pathology test requisition as detailed above for general specimens. Attach to the requisition, the patient's demographic and insurance information sheet and completed Advanced Beneficiary Notice, if applicable.
7. Place the requisition with attached demographic sheet in the outside pocket of the sealed bag.
8. Place specimen in the designated courier pickup area.

Frozen Section

All frozen sections must be submitted fresh. Prior to the date of specimen collection, please call Histology at Pathology Services Lab, (479) 968-6781, to schedule the frozen section.

Bone Marrow Aspirate or Biopsy

Please refer to Bone Marrow Specimen Collection Guidelines.

Tissue for Cytogenetic Studies or Flow Cytometry

1. Notify Pathology Services Laboratory, Histology (479-968-6781) prior to specimen collection that you will have a specimen for cytogenetics or flow cytometry.
2. Place the tissue into a container of RPMI tissue transport media.
3. Properly label the specimen container at the bedside with the patient's name, a second unique patient identifier (date of birth or medical record number), and the source of the specimen.
4. Place the RPMI transport tube in a biohazard bag and refrigerate until courier pickup.
5. Complete the pathology test requisition as detailed above. Attach to the requisition, the patient's demographic and insurance information sheet and completed Advanced Beneficiary Notice, if applicable.
6. Place the requisition with attached demographic sheet in the outside pocket of the biohazard bag.
7. Notify Pathology Services Laboratory, Histology (479-968-6781) that the specimen is ready for pickup.

Muscle or Nerve Biopsy

Prior to the date of specimen collection, please call Pathology Services Laboratory Histology at (479) 968-6781 for special instructions on handling. Specimen submission will need to be arranged with the outside laboratory prior to specimen collection.

Medical Renal Biopsy

Prior to the date of specimen collection, please call Pathology Services Laboratory Histology at (479) 968-6781 for special instructions on handling. Specimen submission will need to be arranged with the outside laboratory prior to specimen collection.

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