

## Guidance for *Candida auris* Colonization Specimen Collecting, Packaging, and Shipping

### **Background**

*Candida auris* colonization testing is performed by molecular methods in order to rapidly and accurately detect the presence of *C. auris*. The Minnesota Department of Health Public Health Laboratory (MDH-PHL) performs a Real-Time PCR assay to detect *C. auris* from skin swabs (combined axilla/groin swab) collected using the ESwab™ collection system. Specimens from other sources (e.g., nares, rectal, vaginal, etc.) will have testing performed by culture.

The turn-around time for PCR results is 2-4 business days. On an urgent basis, results can be returned within 24 hours of specimen receipt at MDH-PHL. Turn-around time for culture results is 7 business days.

**NOTE: Please be aware of the deadline for FedEx pick-up in your area (see page 7 for shipping information)**

**Prior approval from AR Lab Network Central Region Lab is required for point prevalence surveys before collection and shipping of specimens. Send email to [arlnmn@state.mn.us](mailto:arlnmn@state.mn.us). No prior approval is needed for admission screenings.**

### **Specimen Collection**

*Candida auris* colonization kit, provided by Minnesota Department of Health Public Health Laboratory (MDH PHL).

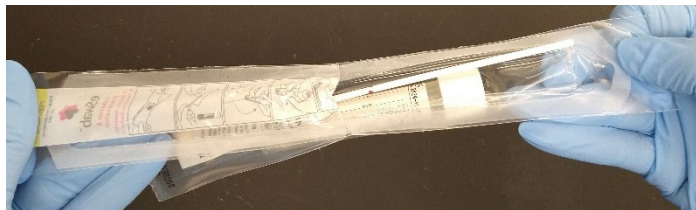
#### **Contents of the Kit:**

- Nylon-flocked swab(s) with liquid Amies transport medium (BD ESwab™ collection and transport system; Becton Dickinson and Company, Sparks, MD, or equivalent)
- Saf-T-Pak box(es) with Styrofoam cooler insert (pre-assembled so that “Biological Substance, Category B” signage is facing outward and cooler insert is inside the box)
- Saf-T-Pak white Tyvek® envelope(s)
- Saf-T-Pak clear bag(s) **or** Fisherbrand Specimen bag(s)
- Absorbent pad(s)
- Parafilm square(s) to seal cap to tube
- Ice pack(s)
- Guidance for *Candida auris* Specimen Collecting, Packaging, and Shipping (this document)

**Procedure for Collecting the Specimen**

The skin (specifically axilla and groin) appears to be the highest yield site to swab for identification of persons colonized with *C. auris*.

1. Before initiating collection, perform hand hygiene and don appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) as indicated by the patient's or resident's clinical care team (e.g., gloves, gown, mask).
2. Open the ESwab™ package by grasping the plastic at the opposite end from the soft tip where it states "PEEL HERE".



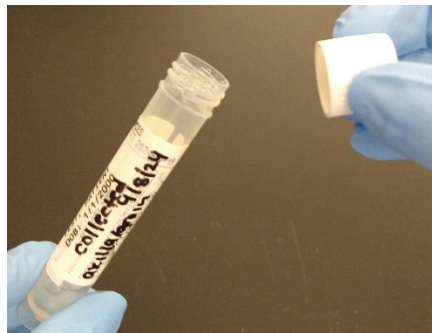
3. Carefully remove the tube from the plastic packaging and label the tube. Leave the swab enclosed in the plastic packaging to prevent contamination.
  - a. Specimens must be clearly labeled with:
    - i. A minimum of 2 patient identifiers. Acceptable identifiers include:
      1. Patient's full name
      2. Date of birth
      3. Medical record number
      4. Sample ID number
    - ii. Date of specimen collection
    - iii. Site of collection (e.g., axilla/groin)



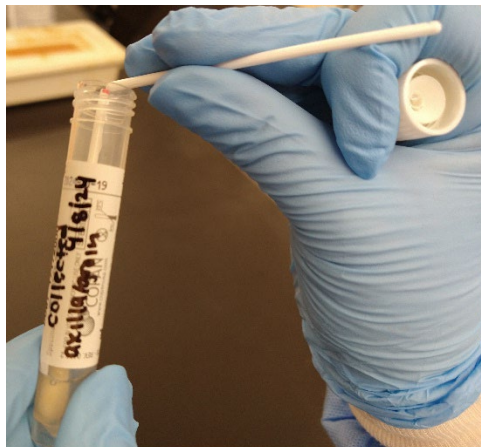
4. Pull the swab from its package, being careful not to touch the soft tip.



5. Firmly rub the soft end of the collection swab across the indicated site at least 3-5 times.
  - a. Single swab axilla and groin combined collection method:
    - i. Rub both sides of the swab tip over the left axilla skin surface and then the right, targeting the crease in the skin where the arm meets the body (i.e., swab both armpits, swiping back and forth 3-5 times per armpit).
    - ii. With the same swab used on each axilla, rub both sides of the swab tip over the left groin skin surface, targeting the inguinal crease in the skin where the leg meets the pelvic region and repeat with the right side (i.e., swab the skin of both inguinal creases swiping back and forth 3-5 times per inguinal crease).
6. Remove the cap from the swab collection tube, then place the soft end of the collection swab into the tube. Be careful to keep the cap from touching any materials that may contaminate the sample. **\*\*DO NOT REMOVE THE LIQUID IN THE TUBE.**
  - a. If the liquid medium in the ESwab™ collection tube is accidentally spilled, the specimen must be recollected with a new ESwab™.
  - b. Do not add liquid medium into the ESwab™ collection tube or attempt to retrieve spilled liquid medium.



7. Snap off the end of the swab at the marked line by bending the plastic handle against the edge of the transport medium container.



8. Screw on the tube cap, the snapped end of the swab should slide into place in the center of the cap.

9. Seal with parafilm (included in supplies) by stretching and wrapping the closed cap tightly in the parafilm material. **\*\*MAKE SURE THE TUBE CAP IS SCREWED ON FIRST.**



10. Complete an AR Lab Network submission form for each specimen and include with shipment. See **Submission Form** instructions (page 4).
11. Package and ship immediately to MDH-PHL, AR Lab Network Central Region laboratory. Specimens must be tested within 14 days of collection (ideal is within 4 days of collection).

**\*If a delay in shipment cannot be prevented, store the swabs at 2-8°C or on ice until shipment.**

### **Labeling**

Specimens must be clearly labeled with:

1. A minimum of 2 patient identifiers. Acceptable identifiers include:
  - a. Patient's full name
  - b. Date of birth
  - c. Medical record number
  - d. Sample ID number
2. Date of specimen collection
3. Site of collection (e.g., axilla/groin)

### **Submission Form**

1. Fill out **ARLAB Central Region Clinical Testing and Submission Form (PDF)** for each specimen located under the "Forms" section of the following website:  
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/idlab/arln.html>
  - Ensure all fields marked with an asterisk (\*) are filled out.
  - For specimen, check the appropriate source type/site. If the swab site is not present, check "Other (specify)" and specify the body site in the "Specify Additional Source Type/Site Information" box.
  - Specimen Test Requested
    - Check the box for "Candida auris Colonization Screening by Candida auris PCR (CAPCR)"

**Packaging**

1. Place the ESwab™ tubes in the clear Saf-T-Pak or Fisherbrand Specimen bag(s) along with the absorbent pad(s) provided in the kit. Place **one swab per bag**. See photos.

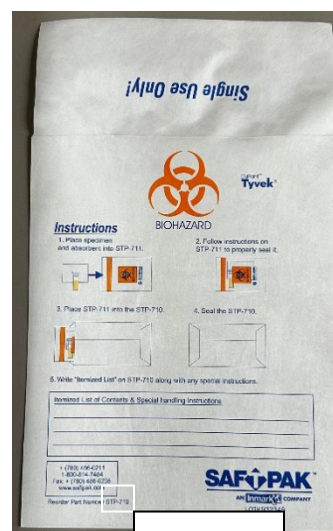
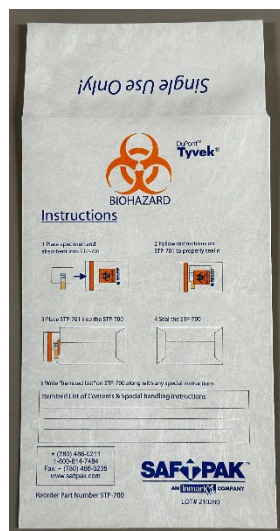


2. If Fisherbrand Specimen bag(s), press and close the zipper to seal.
3. If Saf-T-Pak bag(s), fold tape closure over so that the white liner is visible, then remove the liner to expose adhesive.



4. Gently lay tape closure over the bag opening and smooth with fingers to seal tightly.
5. Place clear Saf-T-Pak or Fisherbrand Specimen bag sealed with its contents into white Saf-T-Pak envelope. See photos.

NOTE: One Saf-T-Pak bag or Fisherbrand Specimen bag can be inserted into the white Saf-T-Pak envelope (left image), while up to 10 clear Saf-T-Pak bag or Fisherbrand Specimen bags can be inserted into one medium white Saf-T-Pak envelope (right image; STP-710).



STP-710

6. On the Saf-T-Pak flap, remove the liner to expose adhesive.



7. Gently fold the Saf-T-Pak flap over the bag opening and smooth with fingers to seal tightly.
8. Place white Saf-T-Pak envelope(s), sealed with its contents, into the provided box with cooler insert and add the ice packs. Confirm that "Biological Substance, Category B" label is outwardly showing. See photos below for sizes and capacity.

STP-309  
1-20 swabs



STP-320 or 310  
21-100 swabs

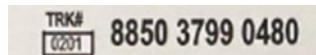


9. Neatly fold and place Antimicrobial Resistance (AR) Laboratory Network Central Region Lab submission form(s) inside the cardboard box on top of the cooler insert.
10. Close flap of box and seal with tape.
11. Ship by courier, or if no courier, see FedEx shipping instructions on next page.

## FedEx Shipping to Minnesota Department of Health, Public Health Laboratory

1. All supply orders will include one FedEx return label or billable stamp per shipping container ordered for shipment to the MDH-PHL.
  - a. E.g., if 4 coolers are ordered, 1 FedEx return label and 3 billable stamps will be included.
2. If additional return labels are needed, please contact your state’s healthcare-associated infections/antimicrobial resistance (HAI/AR) epidemiology team or email [health.phlidops\\_sendouts@state.mn.us](mailto:health.phlidops_sendouts@state.mn.us) with the following information:
  - a. Contact name, phone number, and email
  - b. Facility name and address (street name and number, city, state, zip code)
3. Ship to MDH
  - a. Notify [health.arlnmn@state.mn.us](mailto:health.arlnmn@state.mn.us) of shipment and provide the FedEx tracking number.

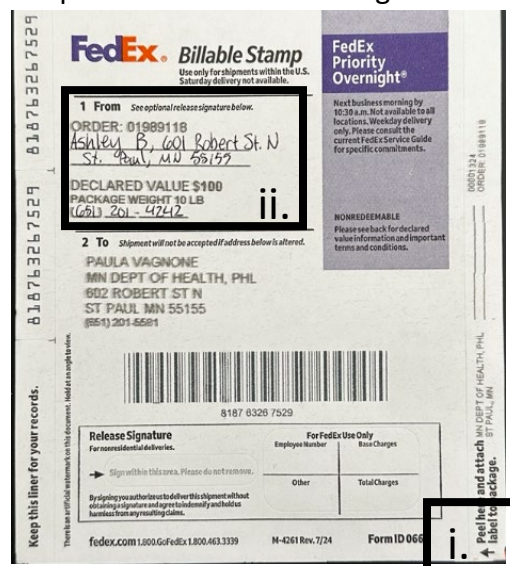
- i. FedEx return label example



- ii. Billable stamp example



- b. Attach the FedEx return label or billable stamp to the shipping container.
  - i. The billable stamp is a sticker that will be peeled off where it is marked.
  - ii. Once attached to the package, fill out the “From” section with your name, address, and phone number.
  - iii. Keep the liner or the tracking number for your records.



**FedEx Billable Stamp**  
Use only for shipments within the U.S. Saturday delivery not available.

**FedEx Priority Overnight®**  
Next business morning by 10:30 a.m. Not available to all locations. Weekday delivery only. Please consult the current FedEx Service Guide for specific commitments.

**1 From** See optional release signature below.  
ORDER: 01989118  
Ashley B. Gohl Robert St. N  
St. Paul, MN 55127  
DECLARED VALUE \$100  
PACKAGE WEIGHT 10 LB  
(651) 261-4242

**2 To** Shipment will not be accepted if address below is altered.  
PAULA VAGNONE  
MN DEPT OF HEALTH, PHL  
602 ROBERT ST N  
ST PAUL MN 55155  
(651) 201-6581

8187 8326 7529

Release Signature  
For residential deliveries.  
Sign within this area. Please do not remove.  
By signing you authorize us to deliver this shipment without obtaining a signature and agree to indemnify you for loss from any resulting claims.

For FedEx Use Only  
Employee Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Basic Charges: \_\_\_\_\_  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
Total Charges: \_\_\_\_\_

8187 8326 7529

Form ID 0668

- c. Shipment option 1: Schedule a FedEx pickup.
  - i. Go to [www.fedex.com](http://www.fedex.com) and log in to your FedEx account. If you don’t have one, create a free account.

- ii. Once you log in, navigate to the Shipping Tab then select “Schedule & Manage Pickups.”
- iii. Click the orange “Schedule a Pickup” button.
- iv. Choose “Pickup with label from another party” and **enter the tracking number** of either the return label or billable stamp.
- v. Enter the address where the package will be picked up.
- vi. Verify “FedEx Express” is the service.
- vii. Enter how many packages, the total weight, and any pickup instructions.
- viii. Enter the pickup date and time window, then select “Schedule pickup.”
- d. Shipment option 2: Deliver to a FedEx drop off location.
  - i. Go to [www.fedex.com](http://www.fedex.com).
  - ii. Navigate to the Locations tab then select “Find a Location.”
  - iii. Enter your city and state in the search bar, then click the “Search” button.
  - iv. Select a location you will be dropping off at then check what time the last pickup for that store is.

Store hours	Last pickup
<b>Latest Express drop off</b>	
Friday	5:00 PM
Saturday	1:30 PM
Sunday	No pickup today
Monday	5:00 PM
Tuesday	5:00 PM
Wednesday	5:00 PM
Thursday	5:00 PM

- v. If possible, deliver same day of collection if prior to last pick-up, otherwise, deliver next day.
- e. **Do not ship on a Friday or the day before a holiday.**

**Questions? Contact:**

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 Phone: 651-201-5581  
 Email: [arlnmn@state.mn.us](mailto:arlnmn@state.mn.us)

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