

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.

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. 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).

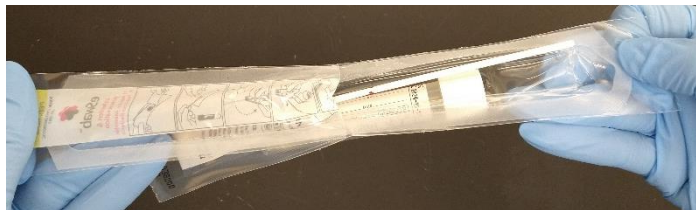
Contents of the Kit:

- 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".



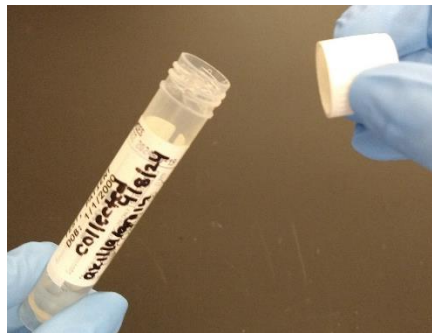
3. Carefully remove the tube from the plastic packaging and label the tube. Leave the swab enclosed in the plastic packaging to prevent contamination.
 - a. Specimens must be clearly labeled with:
 - i. A minimum of 2 patient identifiers. Acceptable identifiers include:
 1. Patient's full name
 2. Date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



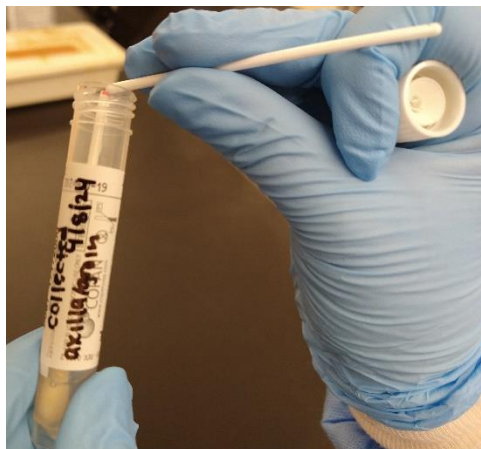
4. Pull the swab from its package, being careful not to touch the soft tip.



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

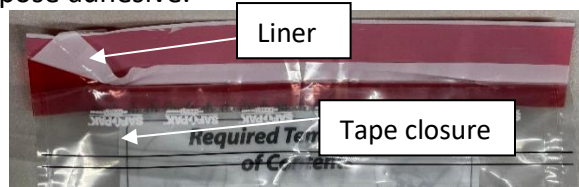
1. Fill out **ARLAB Central Region Clinical Testing and Submission Form (PDF)** for each specimen located under the "Forms" section of the following website:
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/idlab/arln.html>
 - Ensure all fields marked with an asterisk (*) are filled out.
 - For specimen, check 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.

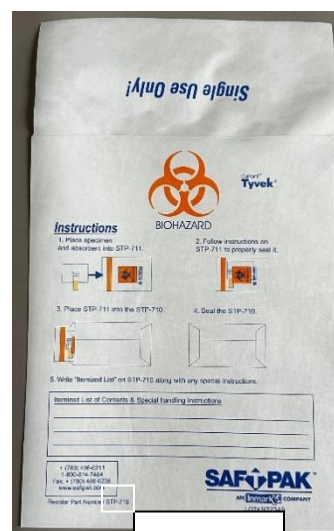
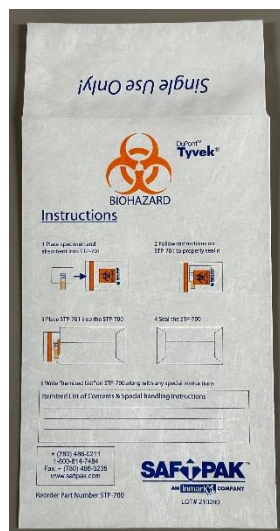


2. If Fisherbrand Specimen bag(s), press and close the zipper to seal.
3. If Saf-T-Pak bag(s), fold tape closure over so that the white liner is visible, then remove the liner to expose adhesive.



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

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



- Gently fold the Saf-T-Pak flap over the bag opening and smooth with fingers to seal tightly.
- 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-302
Up to 3 swabs



STP-309
4-20 swabs



STP-320 or 310
21-100 swabs



- 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.
- Close flap of box and seal with tape.
- Ship by courier. If there is no courier, ship via FedEx by contacting arlnmn@state.mn.us for account information.

Questions? Contact:

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