

STERILE BODY FLUID CULTURE

I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Most normally sterile body fluids are collected by invasive procedures (needle/syringe aspirate) which cannot easily be repeated. Therefore, the utmost care should be taken to insure appropriate collection and transport to the Laboratory. Gloves should always be worn during manipulation of these specimens.

II. SPECIMEN COLLECTION

- (1) Normally sterile body fluids such as pleural, pericardial, peritoneal, synovial, etc. should be collected with needle and syringe using sterile technique.
- (2) Aspirated material should be transferred to a sterile screw-capped tube or a pediatric Isolator tube. The latter tube is recommended whenever clotting of the specimen is likely to occur. **Do NOT submit samples in syringe with needle attached. Syringe samples received with an attached needle will be rejected.**
- (3) In general, the Laboratory receives less than desirable amounts of fluid specimens to optimize diagnostic yield. Large volumes (up to 50 mL) of these specimens (when available) increase culture sensitivity. Swab specimens are inferior and should **NEVER** be used if fluid specimens can be obtained.
- (4) Collection of specimens must be coordinated to insure appropriate volumes and collection containers for hematology, chemistry, and other tests.

