

STREPTOCOCCAL PHARYNGITIS DIRECT ANTIGEN TEST

I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Streptococcus pyogenes, or group A beta-hemolytic streptococcus, causes streptococcal pharyngitis which is particularly common in school age children during the winter-spring months. Classical diagnosis requires culture on blood agar plates coupled with definitive serological identification. Rapid diagnosis of streptococcal pharyngitis is possible by detection of group A streptococcal antigen directly in throat swab specimens by an immunologic procedure (latex agglutination or ELISA). However, the sensitivity of these procedures is insufficient to rule out disease; thus a negative direct test must be confirmed by culture or Nucleic Acid Probe. A positive test may be accepted as a true positive because test specificity is very good.

II. SPECIMEN COLLECTION:

- (1) Collect a throat swab specimen using Copan dual culture swab system provided by Laboratory Services; both swabs should be used simultaneously to sample the posterior pharynx and tonsillar areas. Exudative material should be collected if present. The mouth and uvula should be avoided.
- (2) Place the swabs back into the holder and be sure the swab tip contacts the transport fluid-filled sponge at the bottom of the tube.

Positive test results will be called to the ordering location.