SUPERFICIAL WOUND/EXUDATE CULTURES

I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Many types of specimens are collected as swab cultures from superficial body sites. These include exudates from wounds (surgical and otherwise), bites (animal and human), eyes, ears, draining sinus tracts, burns, etc. Gloves should always be worn when collecting these specimens.

II. SPECIMEN COLLECTION

(1) It is important to collect exudative material from as deeply as possible within a wound and to avoid superficial surfaces, which harbor indigenous colonizing flora microorganisms. Thus, the wound should first be thoroughly cleaned with sterile gauze and sterile non-bacteriostatic water or saline; old or dried exudative material and dried skin should also be removed. If exudative material can be aspirated with needle and syringe from deep wound sites, this is the preferred method of collection. (See *Sterile Body Fluid* Collection for proper handling.)

(2) Alternatively, Copan dual culture system swab provided by Laboratory Services should be carefully inserted to obtain exudative material while avoiding superficial skin sites. Place the swabs in the transport tube and be sure swab tips contact transport fluid-filled sponge at the bottom of the tube. It is always optimal to submit two swab specimens per culture to insure adequate material for both direct smears and culture.

(3) The mini-tipped swab (mini-tip on flexible shaft) should be used when collecting exudative material from a small orifice or mucosal surface such as the ear canal, conjunctiva, nasopharynx, or urethra.

(4) Clearly indicate the source, body site and method of collection of the specimen.

(5) Swab specimens are generally adequate for diagnosing superficial bacterial and yeast (*Candida spp.*) infections. Other specimen types and collection methods are generally required when unusual bacteria or other types of microorganisms, such as filamentous fungi or viruses, are suspected. **Please consult Laboratory Services at (800) 934-6575 in advance so that collection procedures may be optimized.**

NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S
When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.℠