



9 SPECIMEN COLLECTION AND PREPARATION

All routine histology specimens for histological examination (e.g. skin biopsies, endoscopy, colposcopy and operative specimens from theatre etc) should be placed immediately into an adequate amount of 10% buffered formalin, the minimum being four times the volume of the specimen, the optimum amount being ten times the volume of the specimen. Please note that this ratio may not be achievable for larger specimen types. A leak proof container of a suitable size should be used to allow these levels of fixation to be met and prevent tissue distortion.

It is important that specimens are submerged in 10% Neutral Buffered Formalin to ensure adequate fixation. Poor fixation can compromise the quality of the specimen and subsequent Histological examination.

Please do not open any specimens in theatre this will be done in the laboratory to ensure specimen integrity is maintained.

Multiple specimens from a single patient must be clearly labelled and differentiated, and corresponding information provided on the request form.

All specimen containers **MUST** be checked to ensure that lids are fitted properly and clearly marked with required patient and specimen details.

ALL High Risk or Danger of Infection (e.g HIV / TB / HEP B) Specimens MUST be sent to the laboratory DOUBLE BAGGED and labelled high risk so they can be easily identified by the lab staff. These samples are handled differently once received to ensure staff safety. The risk should also be indicated on the request form and Meditech / ICE when ordering the sample to ensure these are not missed once received into the department. Failure to indicate samples that are high risk will result in an incident being logged.

Specimens unable to be sent to the laboratory the same day should be left in refrigerator at 4 degrees.



The department provides pre-filled formalin containers of 20mls, 60mls, 90mls and 120mls. Larger containers up to 20 litre capacity are available on request from Pathology Stores. The number to contact is 0191 445 2307.

For non-gynaecological cytology samples the Pathology Stores department provides; sterile silver topped 60 ml container; plain universal containers; 35 ml tube containing Cytolyt collection fluid; Universal container with cytology preservative and slide mailers. These are available on request from Pathology Stores. The number to contact is 0191 445 2307.



Renal Biopsies

Native Renal Biopsies are sent routinely to the laboratory on saline soaked gauze. If the case is **high risk** then these biopsies **MUST be sent to the lab fixed in formalin, double bagged and labelled as Danger of infection** to ensure staff safety is not compromised when the sample is received.