

Microbiology/Virology Top Tips

ACCURATE AND RELEVANT CLINICAL INFORMATION is needed with each test request as this has a huge impact on clinical governance, the value of the test and the prevention of unnecessary testing for example needle stick injuries including;

- Name and date of birth.
- Underlying medical conditions.
- Recent travel, contact with animals.
- Microbiology history, particularly in chronic conditions e.g. COPD, bronchiectasis, chronic ulcers, wounds etc.
- If pregnant, stage of pregnancy, any significant contact with infectious diseases, when and how long.
- Any previous history of alert organism, colonisation or infections e.g. MRSA, C. diff, ESBL and GRE.
- Antibiotic history i.e. type, duration, and how many courses.

Correct Labelling	Samples will prevent duplication and waste (2% of specimens are currently mislabelled).
UTI	Check previous urine sensitivity results before prescribing an antibiotic. Don't treat a lab report treat the patients symptoms! Don't send routine catheter specimens
Clearance	Testing of Urine and Stool samples post treatment is not usually necessary, except stool testing for food handlers and Ecoli 0157
Throat swabs	In recurrent tonsillitis it is advisable to take a throat swab to confirm the presence of group A streptococcus, its sensitivity and potential treatment of close contacts.
Sputum	Ensure that specimen is not simply SALIVA! If it's saliva it will not be tested.
Hepatitis	Screening requests need comprehensive clinical information i.e. is it for infection, antibody status, post exposure incident or pre/post vaccination? The right information will avoid unnecessary tests. Use ICE protocol.
Mumps	Send viral throat swab (Green) or urine sample for PCR testing. (Do not request serology for antibodies)
Chicken pox	Diagnosis: send viral lesion swab using a virology swab (Green) and not the bacteriology one (Black). Serology should be reserved for use in pregnant ladies with a history of contact (brown bottle)
IV Drug users	Often non-compliant and difficult to get blood from so if relevant information is given to the lab they will do ALL the relevant testing required on samples.
If unsure please do not hesitate to ring for information and advice the friendly Microbiologists and Microbiology Department on Tel: 01709 424242	
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