MICROBIOLOGY
Specimen Collection (by Anatomic Site)

RECTAL:

*Neisseria gonorrhoeae* and *Chlamydia trachomatis*:

Nucleic acid detection is a sensitive method for diagnosis of CT / NG infections and is the recommended method for most patients.

(Insert link to CT/NG Collection Instructions document) CT/NG DNA Specimen Collection Instructions

*Chlamydia trachomatis* culture is generally indicated to assess clinical treatment failure, where DNA may persist post-treatment. Culture requires transport of tissue or swab in special UTM media, available from the Microbiology Laboratory.

*Neisseria gonorrhoeae* culture is generally indicated to assess clinical treatment failure, and to provide an isolate for susceptibility testing. Culture requires a swab in Amies transport medium with charcoal.
THROAT:

*Bacteria (routine)*: Submit dacron swab in paper wrapper. Unless a search for a specific organism or diagnosis is requested (e.g., diphtheria, gonorrhoea, thrush), throat cultures are routinely processed *only* to exclude the possibility of group A streptococcal pharyngitis.

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*Fungi*: see *Bacteria (routine)* - specify a diagnosis of possible thrush.

*Viruses*: Refer to **NASOPHARYNGEAL SPECIMENS** for appropriate collection of specimens for respiratory viruses. Throat swabs are acceptable specimens for Enterovirus culture to diagnose the causative agent of aseptic meningitis.
URETHRA:

*Collection*: Wipe the urethra clean and preferably collect specimen >1 hr after urination

*Bacteria*: "Milk" the urethra and collect the discharge. If no discharge is present, insert a swab 2-4 cm into the urethra and rotate for 15-30 seconds. Place the collection swab in Amies charcoal-containing transport medium and submit it to the laboratory within 6 hours of collection.

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**VAGINA/CERVIX:**

*Collection:* Use a speculum without lubricant (the lubricant can be toxic to the cells and microorganisms of interest). Wipe the cervix clean of vaginal secretions and mucus.

*Bacteria:* Collect the endocervical exudate on a dacron swab with a rotating motion. Place the swab in Amies charcoal-containing transport medium and submit it to the laboratory within 6 hrs of collection.

If culture for potential pathogens other than *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* is indicated, order **Bacterial Culture and Gram Stain, Genital** and when possible indicate what potential pathogens are of concern. Potential pathogens include beta-hemolytic streptococci, *Staphlococcus aureus*, large numbers of yeasts and gram-negative rods, and *Haemophilus* species, etc.

Vaginal-rectal cultures of pregnant women for group B streptococci should be ordered as **Streptococcus Group B Culture.**

*Bacterial vaginosis/vaginitis:* Order Vaginal Smear for Bacterial Vaginosis/Yeast and submit thin smears of vaginal discharge on 2 slides, or collect swab in Amies transport medium with charcoal. Microscopic examination of a Gram-stained smear of vaginal secretions can disclose both "clue" cells, consistent with a diagnosis of bacterial vaginosis, and yeasts.

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Yeast: see Bacterial vaginosis above. Vaginal Smear for Bacterial Vaginosis/Yeast will readily detect clinically active vaginal yeast infection. Culture is generally unnecessary unless isolation of the organism is required for susceptibility testing in cases of treatment failure.