Purpose/Principle

An accurate gynecologic cytology diagnosis depends on an optimal specimen that is labeled, representative of the stated source(s), adequate in amount, thinly and evenly smeared, and properly fixed. It is accompanied by a requisition with correct identification and complete clinical information. The following instructions are intended for clinicians at all sites where gynecologic specimens for Pap test, HPV test, and/or GC/CT specimens are collected.

Related Documents


Sample Requirements

The optimal time for gynecologic cytology specimen collection is two weeks after the start of the patient’s last menstrual period. She should avoid vaginal medications, spermicides, and douches for 48 hours and intercourse for 24 hours before the day of her appointment.

Policy for Acceptance or Rejection

1. Acceptable cytology samples for processing and interpretation when they satisfy the following requirements:
   a. Cytology samples are only accepted from physicians or other authorized persons, licensed and qualified by the following credentials: MD, DO, PA, FNP, and CNM.
   b. Conventional Pap smears are fixed with a cytology spray fixative. ThinPrep Pap Test slides are fixed in PreservCyt Solution.
   c. For a conventional Pap smear, the patient’s name and date of birth, date and time of collection is written in pencil on the frosted end of the slide.
Policy for Acceptance or Rejection, continued

d. The smear/sample is accompanied by a Pap smear requisition that meets the Acceptance or Rejection of Samples and Requisitions policy and includes the following pertinent clinical information, sample source(s), submitting clinician, date of collection, LMP (Last Menstrual Period), pregnancy, hormone and radiation therapy, IUD, previous gynecologic cytologies and surgeries, and risk for developing cervical cancer, as applicable.

2. Unacceptable cytology samples
   a. All samples are evaluated for acceptability upon receipt based on Acceptance or Rejection of Samples and Requisitions policy.
   b. Unacceptable specimens include, but are not limited to, those with no patient identification, slide smashed beyond repair, name on slide/sample not matching name on requisition, unauthorized submitting source, and a missing slide/sample or requisition.
   c. The clinician’s office is contacted and an attempt is made to resolve the problem. If the sample still cannot be processed, it is returned to the submitting clinician’s office.

Conventional Pap Smear Collection

1. Supplies, including Pap smear requisitions, scrapers, slides, and cytology spray fixative can be obtained from Pathology. Please refer to the Conventional Pap Smear Collection Diagrams following this section.

2. Complete out the Pap smear requisition completely, as described above. Attach insurance information.

3. Label the frosted end of the slide with the patient’s name and date of birth in pencil, date and time of collection.

4. The speculum is lubricated with warm water only, not lubricant jelly. It is positioned to expose the cervix at the end of the speculum.

5. If large quantities of mucus or exudates are present, gently remove by patting with dry gauze without disturbing the epithelium.

6. Three specimen sources can be sampled: endocervix, ectocervix, and vaginal pool. Endocervical and ectocervical specimens are recommended for premenopausal patients. Ectocervical specimens are recommended for pregnant patients. Ectocervical and vaginal pool specimens with and without an endocervical component are recommended for peri/postmenopausal patients, as this combination is most likely to pick up abnormally shed endometrials. Hormonal evaluations are performed on vaginal specimens.

7. Endocervical specimens are collected with a cytobrush using a 360 degree rotation within the canal (see diagram).
8. Ectocervical specimens are collected with a spatula using a 360 degree rotation just inside the os, sampling both the transformation zone and ectocervix (see diagram).

9. Vaginal pool specimens are collected by obtaining a drop of vaginal fluid from the posterior fornix using a glass pipette, tongue blade, cervical scraper, or the posterior lip of the speculum.

10. Endocervical and ectocervical specimens are smeared onto the glass slide immediately after collection and immediately fixed with cytology spray fixative (see diagram). Best results are obtained with a uniform thin smear. The cytology spray fixative should be held approximately 25 cm from the slide.

11. If a vaginal pool specimen is collected in addition to ectocervical and/or endocervical specimens, collect the vaginal pool specimen first, place one inch from the end of the glass slide and do not smear initially. (Please refer to diagram.) Next collect the remaining specimens and mix the sample with the lower portion of the vaginal pool specimen. Smear the specimens thinly and evenly across the slide (the rinsed gloved fifth finger works best) and fix immediately with cytology spray fixative, holding the fixative can approximately 25 cm from the slide.

12. Allow the slide to dry before placing it in a cardboard slide folder. Attach the requisition and insurance information to the folder with a rubber band.

13. Inpatient Pap smears should be delivered to the laboratory. Outpatient Pap smears can be picked up by the courier on a daily schedule, or as requested by phone.

14. If there are any questions, call Pathology.
## Conventional Pap Smear Collection Diagrams

### Premenopausal Screening (Single Slide)

1. **Step A:**
   - Only the bristles closest to the handle are exposed.
   - One half turn.

2. **Step B:**
   - Slowly rotate one half to one full turn.

3. **Step C:**
   - Cover portion with paper.

4. **Step D:**
   - Roll and twist across slide bending bristles slightly.

5. **Step E:**
   -...

6. **Step F:**
   -...

**Note:** In pregnant women, omit steps A-D.
Perimenopausal & Postmenopausal Screening (Single Slide)
Use steps A-D as for premenopausal screening.

E. Obtain vaginal pool material from the posterior fornix.

F. Place adequate drop one inch from the end. DO NOT SMEAR!

G.

H. Quickly remove and mix with vaginal pool drop.

I.

J.
Collection of Specimens for Conventional & ThinPrep Pap Tests, HPV Tests, & GC/CT Tests

**ThinPrep Pap Test Collection**

1. ThinPrep Pap Test supplies, including Pap smear requisitions, spatulas, and PreservCyt Solution can be obtained from Pathology.
2. Fill out the Pap smear requisition completely, as described above. Attach insurance information.
3. Label the preservative vial with the patient’s name, date of birth, date and time of collection and the collector’s initials.
4. The speculum is lubricated with warm water only, not lubricant jelly. It is positioned to expose the cervix at the end of the speculum.
5. If large quantities of mucus or exudates are present, gently remove by patting with dry gauze without disturbing the epithelium.
6. Please refer to the ThinPrep Pap Test collection instructions and diagrams on the following pages.
7. Inpatient ThinPrep Pap Tests should be delivered to the laboratory. Outpatient ThinPrep Pap Tests are picked up by the courier on a daily schedule, or as requested by phone.
8. If there are any questions, call Pathology.

**Collection of Samples for HPV and/or GC/CT Testing**

1. HPV and/or GC/CT test requests sent to this laboratory are forwarded to a reference laboratory, which only processes these specimens when they are collected into ThinPrep vials containing PreservCyt Solution. This testing cannot be done on conventional smears.
2. ThinPrep Pap Test supplies, including Pap smear requisitions, spatulas, and PreservCyt Solution can be obtained from Pathology.
3. Collection for HPV and/or GC/CT testing is identical to that of the ThinPrep Pap Test. These tests can be performed either on the ThinPrep vial specimen leftover after processing the Pap test, or on the whole specimen in the ThinPrep vial instead of the Pap test. Fill out the Pap smear requisition completely, indicating which tests are ordered: Pap test, HPV test, and/or GC/CT test. (GC and CT testing are not done separately.) Attach insurance information.
4. Proceed with Steps 3 through 7 in the Section “Thin Prep Pap Test Collection” above.
**ThinPrep® Pap Test Quick Reference Guide**

**Endocervical Brush/Spatula Protocol**

**Obtain…**

...an adequate sampling from the ectocervix using a *plastic* spatula.

**Rinse…**

...the spatula as quickly as possible into the PreservCyt® Solution vial by swirling the spatula vigorously in the vial 10 times. Discard the spatula.

**Obtain…**

...an adequate sampling from the endocervix using an endocervical brush device. Insert the brush into the cervix until only the bottommost fibers are exposed. Slowly rotate ¼ or ½ turn in one direction. DO NOT OVER-ROTATE.

**Rinse…**

...the brush as quickly as possible in the PreservCyt Solution by rotating the device in the solution 10 times while pushing against the PreservCyt vial wall. Swirl the brush vigorously to further release material. Discard the brush.

**Tighten…**

...the cap so that the torque line on the cap passes the torque line on the vial.

**Record…**

...the patient’s name and ID number on the vial.

...the patient information and medical history on the cytology requisition form.

**Place…**

...the vial and requisition in a specimen bag for transport to the laboratory.
ThinPrep® Pap Test Quick Reference Guide
Broom-Like Device Protocol

Obtain…
...an adequate sampling from the cervix using a broom-like device. Insert the central bristles of the broom into the endocervical canal deep enough to allow the shorter bristles to fully contact the ectocervix. Push gently, and rotate the broom in a clockwise direction five times.

Rinse…
...the broom as quickly as possible into the PreservCyt® Solution vial by pushing the broom into the bottom of the vial 10 times, forcing the bristles apart. As a final step, swirl the broom vigorously to further release material. Discard the collection device.

Tighten…
...the cap so that the torque line on the cap passes the torque line on the vial.

Record…
...the patient’s name and ID number on the vial.
...the patient information and medical history on the cytology requisition form.

Place…
...the vial and requisition in a specimen bag for transport to the laboratory.

www.thinprep.com
Collection of Specimens for Conventional & ThinPrep Pap Tests, HPV Tests, & GC/CT Tests

References

Affected Departments: Laboratory Services