

Mycology Submissions

With a skin lesion, the area of infection should be washed with a mild disinfectant and the hair should be trimmed to a length of 0.5 cm. The sample should be collected from the active borders of several suspect sites with hemostats by grasping the hair shafts close to the skin and rolling the hairs from the follicles. It is important to ensure that:

- The root hairs just beneath the skin surface are obtained, and
- There is sufficient sample for microscopic examination and 2 cultures.

This sample should be placed in a sterile container and submitted to the laboratory.

Do not use oil to collect the sample. DO NOT use a swab for mycotic culturing. If including a scalpel blade, place the sample in a rigid container.

The recommended specimen container should have a wide mouth and be sterile (e.g. a sterile urine container or a pill bottle). The specimen should always be contained completely within the container – for example, there should be no hairs sticking out to eliminate the chance of contaminating anyone/thing it may contact during transit to the laboratory. Unacceptable containers are Whirl-pak bags, plastic bags, vacutainers, or paper envelopes.

If collecting a sample from an asymptomatic animal, it is suggested that you use the “brush method.” A sterilized toothbrush or a surgical scrub brush is recommended for this technique. Brush the animal’s coat thoroughly and extensively, and send only the brush to the lab fully contained in a sealed plastic bag with the submission form in a separate bag.

* Please call the Bacteriology Laboratory at 902-566-0821 for further information regarding the collection of fungal specimens other than ringworm.

Reference: Greene. Infectious Disease of the Dog and Cat. 2nd Edition. Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders Company, 1990.

Systemic Mycoses

The deep-seated mycoses (histoplasmosis, blastomycosis, and coccidioidomycosis) are caused by dimorphic fungi. These fungi are members of the Risk Group 3 category, based on the inherent risks of handling them. Samples suspected of containing dimorphic fungi cannot be processed at AVC’s Diagnostic Bacteriology Laboratory. Please call the lab to determine an appropriate sample to collect, and for contact information of a referral laboratory.