

IDEXX Reference Laboratories

Submission requirements and guidance for complex biopsies



2026 IDEXX Complex Biopsy Service

Qualifying complex biopsy submissions not ordered under the Complex Biopsy test code will be automatically changed to the Complex Biopsy test code.

Note: All Complex Biopsy specimen types in the list below must be ordered with the Complex Biopsy test code.

Qualifying Complex/Large/Whole/Bone Specimens:

Tissues requiring decalcification

- + Limbs/digits/jaws/tails or other bone needing decalcification (not obtained by needle or core).

Whole organ submissions and large/complex tissues

- + Brain (whole or partial)
- + Eye
- + Gastrointestinal tract resection and anastomosis specimen
- + Heart (whole or partial)
- + Kidney (whole/nephrectomy)
- + Liver lobectomy with or without gallbladder
- + Lung lobectomy
- + Mammary (left chain, right chain, both chains, or ≥ 3 mammae or masses)
- + Spleen (whole, partial, or one or more incisional specimens)
- + Uterus (whole or partial) with or without ovaries

This test service supports the evaluation of more complex biopsies that require one or more of the following:

- + Pathologic evaluation of multiple sites or lesions within a tissue or organ
- + Complex trimming
- + Additional processing by our experienced histology technicians
- + Extended decalcification and/or fixation time

Results are typically final within 5–7 days. Depending on the level of complexity for specimen assessment, dissection, and processing (including adequate fixation and/or decalcification), results may take up to 14 days.

Note: Specimens containing teeth may require extended decalcification time (up to 21 days).

NEW – Guidelines for additional sites submitted along with qualifying Complex specimens

Three additional test codes have been created to capture **additional sites/lesions** submitted with the initial complex specimen. These may include **both qualifying and non-qualifying** complex specimen types. This change supports transparency in processing time, reporting, and complexity of preparation associated with multi-site evaluations.

Complex Biopsy with 1 additional site/lesion

Complex Biopsy with 2 additional sites/lesions

Complex Biopsy with ≥ 3 additional sites/lesions

Special submission guidelines for specimens that are submitted with the Complex Biopsy test code

Submission guidelines vary based on the specimen type:

Whole, complete, or partial organs such as spleen, kidney, or heart

IDEXX anatomic pathologists recommend submission of spleens in their entirety under the Complex Biopsy test code rather than subsampling.

For example, conditions such as hemangiosarcoma and other splenic diseases can be multifocal. Submission of a whole spleen is considered best medical practice and of higher diagnostic yield than submission of only portions or pieces of spleen. Submitting the entire organ ensures that all potential lesions are examined, reducing the risk of missing diagnostically significant areas.

Partial samples may lead to inconclusive or misleading results. A complete specimen allows our pathologists to provide the most accurate and actionable diagnosis.

What specimen types are not considered complex?

The following specimen types do not typically require complex processing, extended fixation and/or decalcification, and are not as time-consuming to process and evaluate:

- + One or two mammary glands or masses
- + Lumps/bumps/skin masses
- + Lymph nodes
- + Skin lesions
- + Bone marrow biopsies (with or without bone marrow cytology)
- + Punch, needle, and wedge biopsies
- + Endoscopic biopsies
- + Needle, fragments, or punch core bone biopsies < 5 mm thick
- + Tonsil
- + Adrenal gland
- + Thyroid gland
- + Gallbladder
- + Pancreas
- + Anal glands
- + Testes
- + Ovaries (submitted w/o uterus)

For further biopsy submission guidance, please contact IDEXX Customer Support and request to speak with the Pathologist-on-Duty (POD).

Visit idexx.com/pathology to explore IDEXX Pathology Services, access helpful resources, and learn more about our team of pathologists.

For detailed instructions on submitting biopsy specimens—including packaging and formalin shipping requirements—visit idexx.com/submitpathology and go.idexx.com/submitbiopsy.