

Submitting a Sample to the Laboratory

Sample requirements

Hard to read, poorly labelled and unlabelled samples increase the risk of laboratory errors. Please assist us in reducing the risk of errors and possible delays to our service by clearly labelling and identifying samples. When manually filling out forms or labels please take care to write clearly.

Completion of request form:

- Where possible and/or practical use clinic stickers.
- Complete all fields of the request form: Please do not abbreviate clinics or veterinarians.
- Indicate which samples have been sent (there is space allocated on the bottom right of the form) and clearly identify different collection sites on the sample container if multiple samples (such as tissue samples) are submitted.

Labelling of Samples

A sample is correctly labelled when it is traceable to the request form and therefore the animal.

- All samples should be clearly labelled with at least two identifiers where possible. This can be achieved by placing a clinic sticker on the sample (ideal) or hand writing the animal name/ID number/Tag number and the name of the owner.
- Mark all slides with pencil or a permanent marker (Example: Animal ID and B/F for Blood Film, FNA for Fine Needle Aspirate, C for Cytology) – This makes identification of the slides easier and will assist in providing accurate results for the correct animal and sample type.
- When sending aliquots or separated samples (such as Heparin plasma) please write the sample type on the individual sample container/tube.
- Please be as specific as possible.

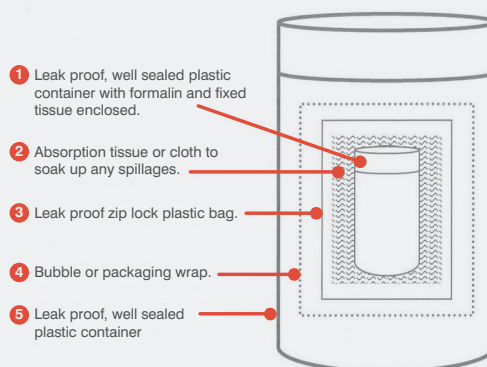
Manually labelled sample



Packaging of samples

- Use appropriate specimen bags for packaging samples.
- Use a separate sample bag for each submission form (case). Do not place multiple forms and samples in the same bag. This minimises the risk of errors in matching samples and forms.
- Package the request form in the side pocket of the bag to avoid contamination of the form should the sample leak. Do not separate the samples from the form.
- Ensure that the zip lock seal on the specimen bag is closed fully – this will ensure that samples remain in the bag and will minimise the risk of contamination should a sample leak.
- Avoid the use of staples and minimise the use of packaging tape in sealing packages and samples as this is a safety risk to staff opening packages.
- Slides should never be packaged in the same sample bag as tissue fixed in formalin as the fumes cause cellular changes.
- Tissue fixed in formalin:
 - Please place inside a leak-proof, well-sealed plastic container with the minimum amount of formalin required to fix the sample.
 - The leak-proof primary container must be enclosed in a zip lock plastic bag along with enough absorbent material to absorb the formalin in the event of a leak.
 - Wrap the parcel in enough bubble wrap or packaging material to withstand shocks encountered during transportation of samples.
 - Place the triple packed sample into a leak-proof plastic container.

Example of correctly packaged formalin sample



Printed sample label

OWNER NAME: John Smith
PATIENT: Patch
SEX: M (N) DOB: 1 JAN 10
SPECIES: Canine - Labrador
SUB REF: 123456A VET: N Cooper
DATE: 1 JAN 19 12:00

IDEXX Cytology Collection Guidelines

ACCURATE RESULTS DEPEND ON QUALITY SPECIMENS. PLEASE FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES:

- Perform sampling by fine-needle aspiration or non-aspiration biopsy, scrapings or imprints.
- Prepare slides in-clinic using either a “squash” preparation or blood-smear technique. Call if you have questions about slide preparation.
- Stain at least one representative slide to ensure adequate cell density and preservation.
- Please **DO NOT** submit syringes with needles.

Patient history and clinical findings contribute to an accurate result.

On containers and slides, please write in pencil:

- Patient's name
- Site/Source

On submission form please include:

- Patient signalment (owner's name, patient's name, age, sex, species, breed, etc.)
- Reference to any previous laboratory results (CBC, biochemistry profile, prior cytology/histology or serology) be sure to include our laboratory reference numbers
- Gross lesion description
- Specific anatomic location (e.g., dermal, subcutaneous, deep tissue, intra-thoracic, intra-abdominal)
- Size, shape, consistency, symmetry, definition of borders
- Clinical history – duration of lesion, progression of lesion, treatment and response to therapy
- Radiographic and ultrasonographic findings
- If you have any pictures to aid in diagnosis please send them to ANZ-caseinfo@IDEXX.com. Please include a note on the submission form to advise the pathologist that images were submitted with the case.

Did You Know? If you have specific questions you would like answered, you can put these on the requisition form.

When submitting aspirates and impressions:

- Submit two to six air-dried slides, preferably at least one unstained slide
- Store at room temperature and protect from temperature extremes. **DO NOT** store in fridge.
- Protect from moisture and insects
- **DO NOT** spray with hairspray or other fixatives
- **DO NOT** expose to formalin fumes
- **DO NOT** ship slides for cytology in the same bag as a formalin-containing biopsy jar.

When submitting fluids and washes:

- Enclose unaltered fluid in a Plain Tube (yellow-topped tube), EDTA Tube (purple-topped tube), along with air-dried slides.
- Prepare slides immediately to preserve cytomorphology (most fluids are stable for only a few hours at room temperature).
- Fluid in EDTA tube with slides is the recommended specimen for cytologic evaluation, especially of cellular or bloody specimens. If a culture is required, submit additional fluid in a sterile yellow top container.
- **DO NOT** submit fluids in a red topped tube (RTT), in a syringe, or as cover-slipped and wet preparations.
- Submission of fluid in a RTT (red topped tube) can interfere with accurate cytologic evaluation due to the presence of clotting activators.



IDEXX Histopathology Collection Guidelines

ACCURATE RESULTS DEPEND ON QUALITY SPECIMENS. PLEASE FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES:

Histopathology tiers and price guidelines

IDEXX operates a tiered histopathology pricing structure. All samples are manually assessed to provide you confidence in your results every time.

If you are unsure of how to code (or charge), your sample please call 0800 838 522 and ask to talk to the pathologist on duty to discuss your case. This will ensure a clear understanding of your needs, and will help you to select the correct samples for histopathological examination, as well as identify any need for samples for other testing (e.g. bacteriology, virology, serology, toxicology).

Turnaround Time

Most evaluations will be completed within 24-72 hours (Business Days) of receipt in our laboratory (unless otherwise indicated). Additional fixation or decalcification will take longer. We will notify you if an unusually long delay is anticipated.

Collection Technique

- Samples are collected for histological examination by standard surgical techniques or at postmortem examination.

Labelling Criteria

Please ensure all specimen jars are labelled with

- Patients name, date
- Type of specimen, (Site / Source)

On submission form please include:

- A thorough clinical history and details of the physical examination are essential for the correct histological interpretation of tissue changes. Information required includes signalment (species, breed, age, sex), a description of the appearance and distribution of lesions, duration of the condition, biopsy sites or post mortem tissue, response to prior treatments, current treatment regimens and any other relevant information.
- You may include any questions to be answered on your requisition form.
- Please send radiographs of bone lesions when they are being submitted for histological examination (see histopathology – bone).
- If you have any pictures to aid in diagnosis please send to ANZ-caseinfo@IDEXX.com

Fixation Guidelines

Do not freeze or refrigerate tissue samples before or after fixing.

For optimum fixation and sectioning use 10% formalin; in a 10:1 ratio of formalin to tissue; and a biopsy size no more than 10 mm thick.

- Place specimens in a wide necked container (approved for use with formalin), with the ratio of formalin to tissue > 10:1.
- Submit entire lesions and tumours with adjacent excised tissue.
- For rapid fixation of larger lesions and tumours, cut a section 0.5-1cm wide through the centre of the specimen - please ensure this is through the epidermal surface on cutaneous lesions. Make impression smears from the cut surface of tumours and submit for cytology in a separate bag.
- Open hollow organs, such as intestine, prior to placing them in fixative.
- Small fragile specimens (bone marrow, Tru-cut liver or kidney) can be wrapped in a gauze envelope so that they do not disintegrate during transport.
- High priority samples can be dispatched on the day of collection as they will fix on their way to the laboratory.
- Samples of lower priority can be fixed for 24 hours at clinic prior to dispatch to the laboratory.

IDEXX Histo & Micro Collection Guidelines

Histopathology

Transport Guidelines

- All samples should be placed in a well sealed leak proof bag containing enough absorbent material for the volume of formalin.
- Fixed tissue which is to be mailed may be placed in a leak proof plastic bag or container with a formalin soaked gauze to keep the tissue moist. (Ensure adequate fixation has occurred prior to transportation).

Histopathology Fee Policies

- Fees are determined by number of sites, lesions or organs indicated on the requisition form.
- For 'Single Tissue' biopsies prices are quoted per anatomical site.
- If the number of sites/lesions is not indicated, we will assume each specimen is from a different site, and will charge separately.
- Surgical margin analysis does not attract an additional fee.

Cancellation Fee

- No fee is applied if cancellation is requested prior to processing. If we have started processing the sample, a fee of \$17.50 Ex GST will be charged to cover costs incurred.

Necropsy Samples

- In-laboratory necropsy services are offered in our Hamilton laboratory on weekdays. Our Hamilton laboratory can only accept necropsies up to 40kg.

Additional Notes

- Margins are complimentary if requested.
- Cage Birds include budgerigars, pigeons, finches and small birds from zoological gardens or fauna parks.
- Large birds from zoological gardens or fauna parks such as waterfowl, poultry, ostriches or emus are not considered cage birds.
- IDEXX Histopathology Reports contain the following report sections: Gross Pathology, Histopathology, Diagnosis, Comments and Margin Analysis.
- If a specific pathologist is requested, we will do our best to meet your request. If the specified pathologist is unavailable, we will contact you to give you the option of waiting or having another pathologist read the case to prevent any delay in processing.



Microbiology

Normal Flora, Predictable Susceptibility Patterns and Non-pathogenic Organisms

IDEXX follows guidelines recommended by the NZVA, combined with our years of experience in performing susceptibility testing. We believe these are "best practice" microbiology techniques, and would be happy to discuss the following policies with you.

Sterile Tubes

- Use glass or plastic tubes with no additives.
- Fluids, urine and tissue can be submitted in sterile containers (moisten tissue with sterile saline or water to prevent drying and loss of viability).

Fluids

Make sure all collection devices containing fluids are sealed and leak proof before submitting. Note: Specimens that are >48 hours old are not suitable for culture, and loss of viability should be expected. As EDTA can inhibit bacteria growth submissions for microbiology testing should not be placed in EDTA tubes.

Blood Culture

Aerobic and anaerobic cultures are performed on all blood cultures. A preliminary report is available within 24-48 hrs.



**Please DO NOT
submit syringes
with needles.**