

Vermont Department of Health Laboratory
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Epidemiology Unit (802)863-7240

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR COLLECTION AND PACKAGING OF SCREENING SPECIMENS FOR
CARBAPENEM-RESISTANT ENTEROBACTERIACEA (CRE)**

PLEASE READ INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY BEFORE COLLECTING SPECIMEN

In order to comply with courier regulations and ensure the safety of laboratory personnel and those involved in the transport of specimens, and to maintain integrity of the sample, the Vermont Department of Health Laboratory (VDHL) will accept for testing only those specimens that are packaged according to the instructions below.

The kit should contain:

- Insulated cooler and ice pack
- Labeled plastic vial. The vial contains a transport medium (Modified Cary Blair) **DO NOT DRINK OR EMPTY VIAL**
- Plastic specimen transport bag containing absorbent material
- Collection and Packaging instructions (Micro 491)
- VDHL-Clinical Test Request Form (Micro 220)
- Sterile cotton swab

Kits can be stored at room temperature until needed. Freezing ice packs prior to use is recommended.

Please note the expiration date of the transport medium, which is stamped on a label affixed to the cover of the cardboard container. **DO NOT USE OUTDATED TRANSPORT MEDIUM.** Expired kits may be returned to the VDHL for replacement.

Instructions

Requirements:

1. Contact the VDH Epidemiology Unit (802-863-7240) to discuss who should be screened and to notify them that specimens will be submitted.
2. Screen epidemiologically-linked patient contacts (e.g., roommates) for CRE with rectal (preferred) or stool cultures.
3. Consider preemptive Contact Precautions of these patients pending results of screening cultures.
4. Do not collect samples for CRE screening on Thursdays or Fridays.

Collection of Specimen:

1. **PRINT PATIENT NAME AND DATE OF COLLECTION ON LABELED PLASTIC VIAL.**
2. Moisten a sterile cotton swab in sterile water or normal saline. Insert the swab 1 cm into the rectum and gently rotate 360 degrees to collect feces. Place the swab in the VDHL transport container #1 and break or snap the swab to fit into the transport vial.
3. Place the labeled vial in the plastic specimen transport bag.

4. Fill out the requisition form completely. **THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS REQUIRED TO ENSURE ACCURATE AND EFFICIENT PROCESSING OF THE SPECIMEN AND REPORTING OF TEST RESULTS.**
 - Full name and address of physician or health care provider
 - Patient's name, address, gender and date of birth
 - Date of specimen collection
 - Type of specimen (please note rectal swab or stool)
 - Please note under "reason for test": Test for CRE colonization
6. Fold the requisition form and place it in the outer pouch of the specimen transport bag.
7. Refrigerate at 4 degrees and keep cold and on ice packs during shipping. Swabs must be received at the VDHL within **24 hours** of collection.

Shipment of Specimen:

- For optimal test results, refrigerate the specimen and ship immediately to the VDHL.
- Specimens should arrive at the laboratory within **1 day of collection.**
- Ship specimen with ice packs in cooler.
- Specimens can be shipped by courier. Specimens may also be dropped off at the VDHL during business hours.

THE LABORATORY WILL DECONTAMINATE AND DISCARD ANY SPECIMEN WHICH IS IMPROPERLY PACKAGED AND MAY PRESENT A RISK TO PERSONNEL.

The specimen may be rejected if:

- Date of specimen collection is missing on the specimen and requisition form
- Patient name is missing on the specimen and requisition form
- Medical provider name/address is missing on the requisition form
- Specimen container is leaking
- Transport medium has expired (see date on container label)
- Multiple specimens from the same patient have the same collection date. Only one specimen per patient per day will be accepted.
- Specimen has not been kept cool during shipping.
- Specimen is received >24 hours post collection.

If you have any comments or questions regarding these instructions, please call one of the telephone numbers listed on the front of this form. Thank you.