

III Non-Clinical Microbiology

1 Contact information

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2 Guideline for specimen collection, storage and transportation

(a) Complaint articles for food-poisoning organism examination

Notes on handling complaint articles

1. These notes set out the conditions necessary for a valid examination of food-poisoning organisms.
2. For the other instructions, refer to your departmental guidelines.

Collection of article

1. Mark and seal the complaint article in a plastic bag in front of the complainant. Take care not to contaminate the sample.
2. Fill out the label. Attach the label firmly to the outside of the plastic bag containing the complaint article or control sample. As labels are not sterile, do not place them in direct contact with the sample / article.

Storage of article before delivery

Store the sealed article at below 10°C if it can reach the laboratory within 24 hours from time of collection. Otherwise, store the sealed article at frozen temperature preferably below -18°C.

Delivery of article

1. Prior agreement should be obtained before sending any complaint articles. Contact the laboratory to confirm delivery time.
2. Deliver the article personally to the laboratory as soon as possible after the test request has been accepted.
3. Maintain the sealed article at below 10°C (but not frozen) in an insulated container during transport. Place a calibrated thermometer inside the insulated container to monitor the temperature. Do not put the sensor of the thermometer in direct contact with the cold pack.
4. Accompany each article with the original copy of request forms (FEHB 33).

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Mark & seal article✓ Phone the laboratory before delivery✓ Maintain article at appropriate temperature✓ Collect article from laboratory after receiving the report |
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(b) Food-poisoning case investigation samples

Collection of samples

1. Collect at least 200 grams of sample for complete investigation.
2. Fill out the labels. Attach a label to each sample. Labels should be attached firmly to the outside of the plastic bag. As labels are not sterile, do not place them in direct contact with the sample.

Delivery of samples

1. Prior agreement should be obtained before sending any samples. Contact the laboratory to confirm delivery time.
2. Submit information about the food-poisoning case. Symptoms and case information are useful for deciding on tests required.
3. Maintain the samples at below 10°C (but not frozen) in an insulated container during transport. Place a calibrated thermometer inside the insulated container to monitor the temperature. Do not put the sensor of the thermometer in direct contact with the cold pack.
4. Accompany each formal sample with the original copy of request form (FEHB 33).
5. Accompany each informal sample with request form (FEHE 97 / DH 75). **Do not group different types of samples in a single request form.**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Contact the laboratory✓ Follow-up food at least 200 grams✓ Submit information about the food-poisoning case✓ Maintain samples at below 10°C (but not frozen) |
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(c) Water samples for bacteriological examination

Notes about sending water samples

1. This information is for water samples for **general bacteriological examination**. For ***Legionella* examination**, please refer to section (d).

Sampling bottles

1. The laboratory provides two types of sterile bottles. Use bottles with sodium thiosulphate for collecting chlorinated water.
2. Do not use bottles after the expiry date. Return expired bottles to the laboratory.

Collection of samples

1. Collect representative sample, taking care to avoid contamination.
2. Collect at least 200 ml sample in the bottle.
3. Fill out the label and attach it securely to the bottle.
4. Mark and seal formal water samples.

Delivery of samples

1. Maintain the sample at below 10°C (but not frozen) in an insulated container during transport. Place a calibrated thermometer inside the insulated container to monitor the temperature. Do not put the sensor of the thermometer in direct contact with the cold pack.
2. Send the sample to the laboratory as soon as possible. The water sample will be invalid 6 hours after collection.
3. Accompany each formal sample with the original copy of request form (FEHB 33 / DH 132A).

4. Accompany each informal sample with a request form (FEHB 33 / DH 132A). **Do not group different types of samples in a single request form.**

- ✓ Chlorinated water in sodium thiosulphate bottle
- ✓ Deliver within 6 hours
- ✓ Maintain sample at below 10°C (but not frozen)

(d) Water samples for *Legionella* examination

Sampling bottles

1. The laboratory provides bottles with sodium thiosulphate for sampling all kinds of water for *Legionella* examination in relation to Legionnaires' disease case investigation.
2. Do not use bottles after the expiry date. Return expired bottles to the laboratory.

Collection of samples

1. Record the temperature of water at the point of sampling.
2. Collect representative sample, taking care to avoid contamination.
3. Collect at least 500 ml sample in the bottle.
4. Fill out the label and attach it securely to the bottle.

Delivery of samples

1. Contact the laboratory before delivering samples.
2. Maintain the sample at below 10°C (but not frozen) in an insulated container during transport. Place a calibrated thermometer inside the insulated container to monitor the temperature. Do not put the sensor of the thermometer in direct contact with the cold pack.
3. Send the sample within 6 hours after collection. Store sample at below 10°C (but not frozen) when prompt delivery is not possible.
4. Accompany each sample with a request form (DH 132B). **Do not group different types of samples in a single request form.**

- ✓ Contact the laboratory
- ✓ Deliver within 6 hours
- ✓ Maintain sample at below 10°C (but not frozen)