

How to Submit Samples for Equine Uterine Cultures

The Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory (TVMDL) offers a variety of diagnostic tests that may be used as part of the breeding soundness examination of a mare. While this handout discusses bacterial culture, TVMDL also offers a uterine biopsy and cytology service.

Uterine culture is one of the more frequently requested tests to assess the uterine environment of the mare. When submitting samples for any type of culture, it's important to take certain steps to ensure sample integrity is maintained during transit to TVMDL.

Here are TVMDL's recommendations when submitting samples for equine uterine cultures:

- Cut swab shaft approximately 4 to 6 inches; even with the top of the transport tube.
- TVMDL recommends sending swabs in transport media. All commercially supplied transport media will suffice for bacterial cultures. However, please be aware certain regulatory tests require specific transport media. This information is noted under the Special Instructions field in TVMDL's test catalog.
- After sample collection with a guarded swab, the following steps should be utilized in the submission process.
 - The swab should be submitted in transport media to enhance the isolation of bacterial pathogens. Swabs may be submitted in sterile red top tubes if transport media is not available although fastidious organisms may not survive and testing may result in a false negative.
 - Transport swab collection systems may be used to submit a sample collected with a guarded swab. Simply discard the swab that is included in the transport swab collection system.
 - Using sterile scissors, cut the guarded swab shaft approximately 4 to 6 inches. Insert the swab into the transport tube and media. Replace the cap.
 - Ship with cold packs to keep samples chilled, but not frozen. Shipping samples overnight is highly recommended to mitigate the growth of opportunistic bacteria as this may complicate the identification of a potential pathogen.

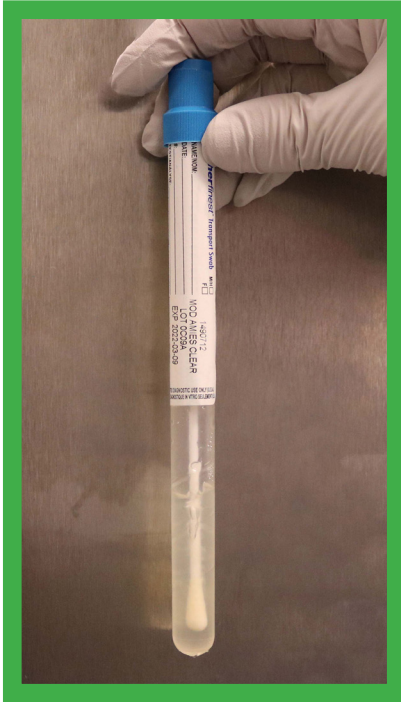
Vendor end caps may be used for transportation from chute side to clinic. Discard caps for transportation to lab.



Cut shaft to approximately 4 to 6 inches.

Once shaft is cut for transport, the remaining materials can be discarded.

Ideal Submission

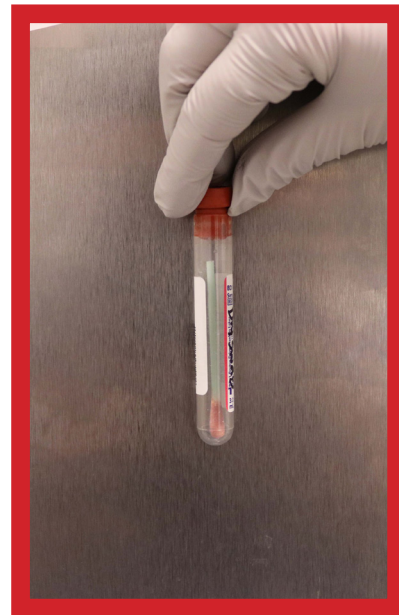


- Swab shaft cut even with top of tube
- Transported with transport media

Nonideal Submission



- Not submitted in transport media
- Vendor's end caps used
- Swab end not visible



- Not submitted in transport media
- Acceptable for testing, however, fastidious organisms may not survive transport. Submission may yield a false negative.