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<b>Section:</b> Specimen Processing Procedures	Subject Title: <b>Specimen and Isolate Retention Times</b>	
Prepared by QA Committee		
Issued by: Laboratory Manager	<b>Revision Date: 1/16/2024</b>	
Approved by Laboratory Director: Microbiologist-in-Chief	<b>Next Review Date: 11/16/2025</b>	

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## **BACTERIOLOGY & MYCOLOGY**

### **SPECIMEN RETENTION TIMES**

Specimens are kept in the laboratory for the duration of the storage **at minimum**.

Specimen	Storage	
	Temperature	Duration
Urines	4°C	4 days
Swabs*, Resp, Stool, other non-sterile samples	4°C	8 days
Infection Control Surveillance Swabs	4°C	1 month
CSF and other sterile fluids	4°C	4 weeks
Sterility & Environmental testing samples	4°C	1 month
Milk Bank samples	4°C	1 month
Tissues - save portion in freezer vial	-70°C	3 months
- If extra tissue remaining	4°C	1 month
Positive culture plates	Room Temperature (RT)	3 days after final reading
Positive blood culture bottles including PD	RT	2 weeks
Blood Culture Smears	RT	7 days
Gram stain	RT	3 weeks
Teaching slides	RT	Indefinitely
Mycology teaching cultures in distilled water	RT	Indefinitely


\* Except Infection Control Surveillance Swabs

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### ISOLATE RETENTION TIMES



Isolates are stored within the microbiology containment zones for the minimum storage duration.

Isolates	Storage	
	Temperature	Duration
MRSA, VRE, MRO and other organisms with epidemiological implication (refer to list in Infection Control Manual)	-70°C	Indefinitely
Significant blood culture isolates (Refer to list in blood culture manual)	-70°C	5 years minimum
VITEK purity plates (except Staphylococcus or Enterococcus)	4°C	3 months
Control plates of Oxacillin Screen and Vancomycin Screen	4°C	6 months
β-haemolytic-streptococcus and yeasts	Room Temperature (RT)	10 days
All isolates sent to PHL for ID	-70°C	5 years minimum

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## VIROLOGY

### SPECIMEN RETENTION TIMES

Specimens are kept in the laboratory for the minimum duration of the storage.

Specimen	Storage	
	Temperature	Duration
Primary Specimen Container	4°C	≥1 week
Primary Specimen Container: BK/CMV	RT	≥ 2 days
Testing Sample aliquot - BK/EBV/CMV	-20 °C	≥3 months
Testing Sample aliquot - Respiratory/Non-sterile	-70 °C	≥3 months
Testing Sample aliquot - Sterile Sites	-70 °C	≥6 months
Testing Sample aliquot: HBV DNA	-20 °C	≥ 5 years
Testing Sample aliquot: HCV RNA	-70 °C	≥ 5 years
Study Specimens	As per Study Protocol	

## SEROLOGY

### SPECIMEN RETENTION TIMES

Specimens are kept in the laboratory for the minimum described duration



Serum	Storage	
	Temperature	Duration
Primary Specimen Container:	4°C	≥1 week
Primary Specimen Container: Architect Samples	4°C	≥2 weeks
Testing Sample Aliquot: (Routine, Non-transplant)	-20°C	2-3 months
Transplant Specimens	-20°C	10 years
Trillium Gift of Life	-20°C	10 years
Bone Bank	-20°C	Send each filled box to Bone Bank for longer storage
HIV Test	-20°C	10 years
In vitro fertilization	-20°C	10 years
Cord blood	-20°C	10 years

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**Record of Edited Revisions**

**Manual Section Name: Specimen Retention Times QPCMI19001**

Page Number / Item	Date of Revision	Signature of Approval
Annual Revision	December 15, 2006	Dr. T. Mazzulli
Annual Revision	October 30, 2007	Dr. T. Mazzulli
Annual Revision	June 18, 2008	Dr. T. Mazzulli
Annual Revision	July 30, 2009	Dr. T. Mazzulli
Changed MORE to TGLN	March 25, 2010	Dr. T. Mazzulli
Annual Revision	May 31, 2011	Dr. T. Mazzulli
Annual Revision	May 31, 2012	Dr. T. Mazzulli
Changed IC swabs to 1 month for all sites	January 30, 2013	Dr. T. Mazzulli
Changed Vitek purity plates for gram negatives to 3 months	January 30, 2013	Dr. T. Mazzulli
Annual Review	May 31, 2013	Dr. T. Mazzulli
Changed Serology Retention Times	May 27, 2014	Dr. T. Mazzulli
Annual Review	May 27, 2014	Dr. T. Mazzulli
Annual Review	June 16, 2015	Dr. T. Mazzulli
Updated Virology and Serology Tables		
Annual Review	June 16, 2016	Dr. T. Mazzulli
Annual Review BC smears added.	March 13, 2017	Dr. T. Mazzulli
Annual Review	March 30, 2018	Dr. T. Mazzulli
Annual Review	March 30, 2019	Dr. T. Mazzulli

**Full document review included in all updates. Bi-annual review conducted when no revision had been made within 2 years.**

Page Number / Item	Date of Revision	Signature of Approval
Full document review	December 04, 2020	Dorna Zareianjahromi
Minor formatting changes	April 11, 2021	Jessica Bourke
Updated the manual name from "Specimen Retention Times" to "Specimen and Isolate Retention Times"	July 21, 2022	Oliver Li
Added "Sterility & Environmental testing samples" and "Milk Bank samples" retention times	July 22, 2022	Oliver Li
Updated sterile fluids to keep for 1 month to match CSF, other non-sterile samples keep 8 days. Clarified tissue storage	Oct 4, 2022	Wayne Chiu

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