

TML\MSH Microbiology Department Policy & Procedure Manual	Policy # MI\RESP\01\v02	Page 1 of 1
Section: Respiratory Tract Culture Manual	Subject Title: Introduction	
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INTRODUCTION

I. Introduction

A. Upper Respiratory Tract (above the larynx) Specimens include:

- Throat swabs
- Epiglottal swabs
- Nasal/nasopharyngeal aspirates / swabs
- Mouth swabs
- Oral abscess swabs / aspirates
- Sinus or antral aspirates

B. Lower Respiratory Tract Specimens include:

- Sputum
- Bronchial aspirates (washings)
- Bronchial brushings
- Bronchoalveolar lavage (BAL)
- Lung biopsies
- Lung Aspirates
- Open Lung biopsies

Note: Lower respiratory tract specimens may be contaminated with organisms found in the upper respiratory tract ([Commensal Flora – Respiratory Tract](#)). Sputum samples are screened to assess the amount of oropharyngeal contamination before processing.