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Section: Respiratory Tract Culture Manual	Subject Title: Oral Abscess Swabs	
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ORAL ABSCESS SWABS

I. Introduction

Oral abscesses are usually caused by a mixture of both aerobic and anaerobic organisms from the oral cavity. However, swabs from an oral abscess will only be processed for *S. aureus*, Group A streptococcus and *H. influenzae* unless otherwise requested.

II. Specimen Collection and Transport

See [Pre-analytical Procedure - Specimen Collection QPCMI02001](#)

III. Reagents / Materials / Media

See [Analytical Process - Bacteriology Reagents_Materials_Media List QPCMI10001](#)

IV. Procedure

A. Processing of Specimens:

See [Specimen Processing Procedure QPCMI06003](#)

a) Direct Examination: Gram stain – Quantitate the presence of pus cells and organisms.

b) Culture:

Media	Incubation
Blood Agar (BA)	CO ₂ , 35°C x 48 hours
Haemophilus Isolation Medium (HI)	CO ₂ , 35°C x 48 hours

If Actinomyces requested or suggested on Gram stain, **add**:

Fastidious Anaerobic Agar (BRUC)	AnO ₂ , 35 ⁰ C x 7 days
Kanamycin / Vancomycin Agar (KV)	AnO ₂ , 35 ⁰ C x 7 days

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B. Interpretation of cultures:

Examine the BA and HI plates after 24 and 48 hours incubation for any growth of Group A streptococcus, *S. aureus* and *H. influenzae*. Examine the BRUC and KV plates (if set up for Actinomyces) after 48 hours and 7 days.

C. Susceptibility testing:

Refer to Susceptibility Testing Manual.

V. Reporting

Gram stain: Report with quantitation the presence of pus cells and organisms.

Culture:

Negative Report: “Commensal flora” or “No growth”.
“No Actinomyces isolated.”

Positive Report: Quantitate and report all significant isolates with appropriate susceptibilities.
Report “Commensal flora” if also present.

Telephone all positive Group A streptococcus results to ward / ordering physician.

VI. References

P.R. Murray, E.J. Baron, M.A. Pfaller, R.H. Tenover, R.C. Tenover. 2003. Manual of Clinical Microbiology, 8th ed. ASM Press, Washington, D.C.

H.D. Izenberg. 2003. Respiratory Tract Cultures, 3.11.1.1 – 3.11.3.1 in Clinical Microbiology Procedures Handbook, 2nd ed. Vol.1 ASM Press, Washington, D.C.