

## Guidance for *Candida auris* Colonization Specimen Collection, Packaging, and Shipping

*Candida auris* colonization testing is performed by molecular methods in order to rapidly and accurately detect the presence of *C. auris*. The San Bernardino County Public Health Laboratory (DPH Lab) performs a Real-Time PCR assay to detect *C. auris* from skin swabs collected using the ESwab™ collection system. For specimens with indeterminate PCR results, culture-based colonization testing will be performed and results will be reported. Specimens for which positive PCR results were obtained will be cultured for potential referral to ARLN Regional Laboratory for AFST and/or WGS, however, for colonization screening only. Molecular results will be reported. No culture will be done on PCR-negative specimens.

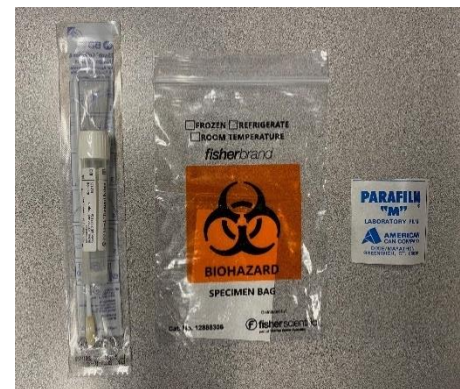
The turn-around time is 2-3 business days for PCR results, and 7-14 business days for culture screening results.

### Sample Collection

*C. auris* colonization kit, provided by DPH Lab on request. Shipping materials to return samples to DPH Lab are also available if needed.

#### Contents of the Kit:

- 1 Regular Flocked BD™ ESwab Collection Kit (shown in picture on left; **unused ESwab collection kits should be stored at 5-25°C**)
- 1 Fisherbrand™ Biohazard Specimen Bag w/ Absorbent Pad (shown in picture in middle)
- 1 Parafilm square to seal cap to tube (shown in picture on right)
- Therapak® 95 kPa Transport Bag \*
- Guidance for *Candida auris* Colonization Specimen Collection, Packaging, and Shipping (this document)



#### By Request:

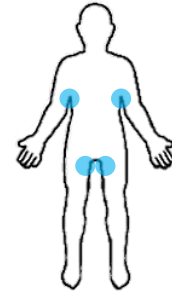
- 8 oz Cold pack \* (shown in picture to the right; **place provided cold pack(s) in freezer upon receiving supplies so they are ready for shipment once specimen collection is complete**)
- Saf-T-Pak™ Shipping Container w/ Category B markings (w/ insulated chest)\*



**\*quantity and/or size of these items will be based on the number of kits sent/expected to be returned**

## **Procedure for Collecting the Swab**

The skin, specifically axilla and groin, has been found to be the highest yield site for the detection of *C. auris* on colonized persons (see highlighted areas in diagram to the right).



1. Before initiating collection, hand hygiene should be performed and appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) should be donned as indicated by the patient's clinical care team (e.g. gloves, gown, mask).
2. Open the ESwab™ package by grasping the plastic at the opposite end from the soft tip. (See Appendix A for additional collection diagrams and instructions)
3. Carefully remove the tube from its packaging, leaving the swab tip enclosed in the package to prevent contamination.
4. Pull the swab from its package, being careful not to touch the soft tip. Firmly rub the soft end of the collection swab across the indicated site at least 3-5 times.

Single swab axilla and groin composite collection method:

- a. Rub both sides of the swab tip over the left axilla skin surface and then the right, targeting the crease in the skin where the arm meets the body (i.e., swab both armpits, swiping back and forth ~5 times per armpit).
  - b. With the same swab used on each axilla, rub both sides of the swab tip over the left groin skin surface, targeting the inguinal crease in the skin where the leg meets the pelvic region and repeat with the right side (i.e., swab the skin of both hip creases swiping back and forth ~5 times per hip crease).
5. Remove the cap from the swab collection tube, then place the soft end of the collection swab into the tube. Be careful to keep the cap from touching any materials that may contaminate the sample and make sure to hold tube upright so that liquid transport medium doesn't spill out.
    - a. If liquid medium in the ESwab™ collection tube is accidentally spilled after inserting the swab, the specimen must be recollected with a new ESwab™.
    - b. Do not add liquid medium into the ESwab™ collection tube or attempt to retrieve spilled liquid medium.
  6. Snap off the end of the swab at the marked red line by bending the plastic handle against the edge of the transport media container.
  7. Screw on the tube cap. The snapped end of the swab should slide into place in the center of the cap. Seal with Parafilm (included with kit) by stretching and wrapping the closed tube cap tightly in the parafilm material. Please be sure that cap is fully screwed on before sealing with Parafilm.
  8. Apply patient/resident identification label or clearly write specimen information on the tube. See specimen labeling section [below](#).
  9. Complete the DPH Lab specimen batch spreadsheet for all specimens to be submitted. Note all required fields must be completed. Save and submit the spreadsheet for each specimen as an email attachment to [DPHLAB@dph.sbcounty.gov](mailto:DPHLAB@dph.sbcounty.gov). Also print the spreadsheet to accompany all specimens prior to shipment.

10. Package and ship immediately to San Bernardino County Public Health Laboratory Receiving. See shipping instructions below.

### **Specimen Labeling**

Specimens must be clearly labeled with:

1. Patient's full name AND minimum of one other patient identifier from the list below:
  - Date of birth
  - Medical record number
  - Sample ID number
2. Date and time of specimen collection
3. Site of collection (e.g. axilla/groin)

### **Shipping**

1. Schedule a pickup with GLS which corresponds with end of collection and packaging of samples. If asked, the account number to provide is **35483**.

**NOTE: Specimens must be tested within 9 days of collection. Please coordinate collection and shipment to ensure that swabs reach the lab by Thursday 4:00 PM to match our testing schedule. If a delay in shipment cannot be prevented, store the swabs at 2-8°C until shipment.**

2. Place sealed ESwab™ tube into a clear Fisherbrand™ biohazard bag (absorbent pad already in bag). Place one swab per bag. (See Figure 1)
3. Place clear Fisherbrand™ biohazard bag, sealed with its contents, into clear Therapak 95 kPa bag through opening on the front. (See Figure 2).

**NOTE: up to 10 clear biohazard bags can be inserted into one 95 kPa bag**

4. Remove adhesive line and fold along the opening (as instructed on bag) to seal the 95 kPa bag. Be sure to smooth out from side to side and pinch the corners so that the bag is fully sealed.
5. Place filled-out batch submission form in separate plastic bag, sealed to protect from moisture.
6. Place 95 kPa bag(s) sealed with its contents into the provided Styrofoam shipping container (add additional bags as needed)
7. Place sufficient amount of cold packs into the Styrofoam shipping container (outside of the 95 kPa bag(s)). Do NOT use dry ice.
8. Ensure the Biological Substance, Category B label is visible on the side of the exterior box (if provided with shipping container, the label should be printed on the outer box). (See Figure 3)



Figure 1

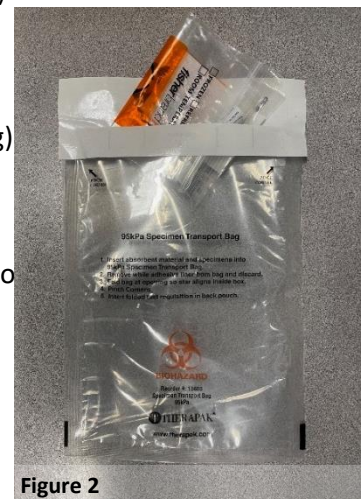


Figure 2

9. Close outer cardboard box, seal with tape, and place provided return shipping label on top of the existing shipping label (from shipment of supplies).

**Do NOT cover Category B Biological Substance or UN 3373 markings.**

10. Place Shipper and Consignee labels in the designated boxes on the outside of the box. (See yellow highlighted boxes in Figure 3)  
Shipper information should include name of submitter facility and staff person, shipping address, and phone number.

Consignee information is as follows:

**San Bernardino County Public Health Laboratory  
1st Floor Lab  
150 E. Holt Blvd.  
Ontario, CA 91761**

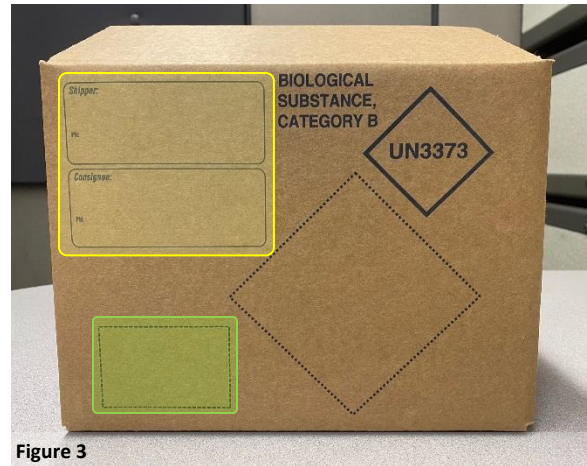


Figure 3

11. Responsible party name and phone number should be filled out and placed beneath the Shipper and Consignee spaces. (See green highlighted box in Figure 3)
12. Deliver package to scheduled GLS pick up. Tracking information will be sent to MDL once the package is in GLS hands.

### **Special shipping considerations**

1. Ensure employees responsible for packing and/or shipping specimens are properly trained on shipping “Biological Substance, Category B” specimens. (CDC Packing and Shipping Training available [online](#))
2. Swabs must be processed for testing within 9 days of collection. Therefore, it is imperative that swabs arrive at the the DPH Lab within 6 days from the date of collection at latest.
3. The DPH Lab is not open on weekends and during county holidays. Shipment of swabs must be planned for delivery to occur during working days, Monday through Thursday between 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

### **Alternate shipping option**

1. Facility staff may choose to directly deliver the specimens to the DPH Lab at the address above in a styrofoam box or reusable cooler Monday through Thursday between 8:00a.m and 4:00p.m. Contact the lab for more information.

**For any questions, please contact San Bernardino County Public Health Lab or Communicable Disease Section at [dphlab@dph.sbcounty.gov](mailto:dphlab@dph.sbcounty.gov).**