

Ocular Specimens

1. General considerations

- a. Obtain viral and chlamydia samples before topical anesthetics are instilled.
- b. Obtain viral cultures using the flocced swab viral transport system.
- c. Send prepared smears and inoculated media to the laboratory immediately.

2. Conjunctival scrapings

- a. One or 2 drops of topical anesthetic are generally instilled.
- b. Scrape the lower tarsal conjunctiva with a sterilized kimura spatula.
- c. Inoculate the appropriate media directly.
- d. Prepare smears by applying the scraping in a circular manner to a clean glass slide or by compressing material between two glass slides and pulling the slides apart.
- e. Alternatively, use an E-swab swab to sample the inferior tarsal conjunctiva (inside surface of eyelid) and the fornix of the eye. Organisms are more readily detected in scrapings.

3. Corneal scrapings

- a. Obtain conjunctival samples prior to corneal scrapings. Sometimes conjunctival cultures are helpful in assessing the possibility of contamination of corneal cultures.
- b. One or 2 drops of topical anesthetic are generally instilled.
- c. Using short, firm strokes in one direction, scrape multiple areas of ulceration and suppuration with a sterilized kimura spatula. (Keep the eyelid open, and be careful not to touch the eyelashes.)
- d. Inoculate each scraping directly to appropriate media. (Multiple scrapings are recommended because the depth and extent of viable organisms may vary.)
- e. Prepare smears by applying the scrapings in a gentle circular motion over a clean glass slide or by compressing material between two clean glass slides and pulling the slides apart.

4. Intraocular fluid

- a. Use a needle aspiration technique to collect intraocular fluid.
- b. Inoculate appropriate media directly, and immediately transport the samples to the laboratory.
- c. Prepare smears by spreading a drop of material over the surface of a cleaned glass slide with a sterile kimura spatula or by compressing the material between two glass slides and pulling slides apart.

Collection considerations for ocular specimens

Culture	Comments
Bacteria	Inoculate media directly with ocular scrapings. (If <i>N. gonorrhoeae</i> is suspected, collect an Aptima swab for testing or submit in E-swab for culture.)
Fungi	Inoculate fungal media directly with ocular scrapings.
Anaerobes	Use E-swab, anaerobic transport system. If inflammation occurs after extra-capsular cataract extraction, rule out <i>Propionibacterium</i> spp.
Parasites	For detection of <i>Acanthamoeba</i> spp., contact lab for instructions.
Chlamydia	Use Aptima swab for specimen collection.
Virus	Use flocced swab placed in viral transport medium.
Mycobacteria	Inoculate medium directly with ocular scrapings. Obtain proper media from Microbiology lab.