

Specimen Rejection Criteria

National Chlamydia Laboratory Committee National Infertility Prevention Project (IPP)

A reliable laboratory test for *Chlamydia trachomatis* requires that an adequate specimen be collected, accurately labeled, properly transported and that the handling and testing in the laboratory be quality assured throughout the entire process. It is essential that an adequate specimen be collected as the initial step in the *C. trachomatis* screening of women because rarely are positive test results obtained on inadequate specimens. Over 95 percent of positive *C. trachomatis* test results, regardless of the procedures used for screening, are found on adequately collected endocervical specimens. Therefore, it is important that the screening laboratory establish criteria for rejection of specimens of poor or substandard quality. The laboratory director is responsible for knowing the rejection criteria for the specific chlamydia test kits used by the laboratory.

Indications of Poor or Substandard Specimen Quality

1. Inadequate number of endocervical cells
2. Specimen too long in transit
3. Specimen shipped at incorrect temperature
4. No name on specimen
5. Mismatched identifiers on specimen and laboratory form
6. No swab in tube
7. Wrong swab used to collect specimen
8. Wrong specimen collection kit used
9. Expired transport media
10. Quantity Not Sufficient (QNS)
11. Grossly bloody specimen
12. Thick mucous (may indicate collection area not swabbed clean prior to collection)
13. Inappropriate collection site (based on package insert)
14. Broken tube or specimen leaked in transit

Sexual Assault and Sexual Abuse

Culture is the recommended method for detecting *C. trachomatis* in urogenital, pharyngeal, and rectal specimens. Data, experience, and court cases are insufficient to assess the applicability of NAATs to detect *C. trachomatis* in investigating sexual assault and abuse. However, certain researchers have indicated that NAATs for *C. trachomatis* could be used as an alternative to cell culture if cell culture is unavailable and if another NAAT that targets a different sequence can be performed as an additional test if the initial NAAT test is positive.¹

¹**Screening Tests To Detect *Chlamydia trachomatis* and *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* Infections – 2002.** CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. October 18, 2002, Vol. 51. No. RR-15.