

COLLECTING SWABS FOR HERPES OR VARICELLA VIRUS DETECTION BY DIRECT STAIN, CULTURE, OR PCR

GOAL: Collect cells from base of lesion (where most infected cells are) and vesicle fluid.

PROVIDED: Viral transport medium (M4 or UTM), 2-swab pack, *Note: Use only the Dacron or flocked swabs provided to collect. Other swab types may interfere with detection.*

NEED - NOT PROVIDED: Sterile syringe with needle or a scalpel blade; disinfectant; sterile swab to remove pus

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. **Identify** best vesicle to sample. Young vesicles have the highest yield; ulcerated or crusted lesions contain less virus.
2. **Expose** vesicle base – FIGURE 1 *Note: Do not disinfect skin first; disinfectants can inactivate virus or inhibit PCR.*
 - **Early vesicle:** Lift up the vesicle cap with the syringe needle or scalpel blade.
 - **Ulcer:** Remove unwanted pus with a swab (not provided) without disturbing base of lesion.
 - **Crust:** Remove scab with needle to expose base of lesion
3. **Swab** vesicle base - FIGURE 2.
 - Vigorously scrub central base and sides of vesicle with the provided swab to obtain basal cells and fluid. This will cause momentary pain. Avoid inducing bleeding.

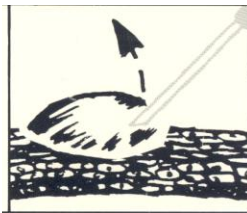


FIGURE 1

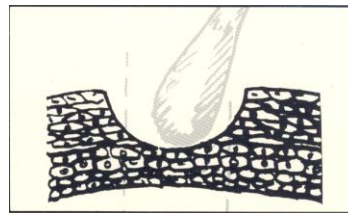


FIGURE 2

4. **Inoculate** the transport medium
 - Immediately place swab in transport medium. Break or cut off swab shaft, allowing tip to fall into the tube. Discard swab shaft.
 - Cap tube, label, place in biohazard bag, and send immediately to lab with completed requisition
5. **Disinfect** the wound