

# SLIDE PREPARATION TIPS FOR CYTOLOGY SPECIMENS

1. Use frosted slides to clearly label slides with the animal's name and the location aspirated.
2. Use pencil to write on the frosted section of the glass slide, as ink may wash off during staining.
3. When using single-sided frosted slides, it helps to ensure material is placed on the same side of the slide as the frosting/label.
4. Label the slides and not the slide carriers. This is especially important when multiple sites are sampled and sent to the laboratory for cytological assessment.
5. A diamond pen for etching/circling particular areas of note on glass slides which you would like the cytopathologist to examine, can also be used (contact your laboratory or drug wholesaler to enquire about purchasing these).
6. Ensure clean glass slides are used and minimize handling of glass slides to reduce collection artefacts (e.g., squames off your fingers).
7. Prepare two slides from each collection.
8. Be gentle when preparing squash preparations. The weight of the slides together with the 'suction' produced from the fluid material is usually adequate and further downwards force is not required.
9. Rapidly drying the slides (hairdrier or by 'waving' in the air) after preparation, reduces cell crenation & slow-drying artefact, resulting in superior cell preservation.
10. Simply spraying material onto the slide often produces thick cell clumps, which will impede individual cell cytological evaluation.
11. The presence of a large amount of blood or the preparation of thick smears also severely hinders cytological cell evaluation.
12. Avoid placing material near the edges of the slides, particularly towards the shorter edges, as these regions may be difficult to assess microscopically and automatic stainers may not adequately stain these regions. Furthermore, there is an increased likelihood that superficial squames from human fingers will have contaminated these areas during smear preparation.

# PACKAGING YOUR SHIPMENT

Follow these easy steps to ship diagnostic samples for processing:

- Ensure that all tubes/jars are labeled with the date, patient's name and type of specimen (e.g., serum, plasma, urine, etc).
- Secure all caps and lids, and then wrap the tubes/jars in absorbent, cushioning material (paper towels or cotton/wool balls) to protect them from breaking and to absorb any potential spillage.
- Use plastic slide containers for blood smears and cytology slides.
- Place the wrapped specimen in a plastic bag and seal it securely.
- Put the test request form in the rear pouch, and then place everything into a second plastic bag. (Double-bagging is required.) Place your bags in a sample submission box.

NOTE: More than one patient specimen (bagged individually) can go into each box if the tubes are properly labeled, bagged and sealed.

- If required, place a frozen gel pack into a separate sealed bag, and then put it into the sample submission box. Gel packs are not required for histopathology specimens.