

## Reference Sheet for Blood Culture Draws

Blood Cultures are drawn to identify a pathogen that causes an infection such as sepsis, endocarditis, or a fever of unknown origin.

In order to identify the pathogen in an effective and timely way the policy and procedure for obtaining the blood cultures must be followed which is located in the Specimen Collection Manual issued by the Department of Laboratory Medicine and is found on each unit.

Focus	Fact	Rationale
<b>Number of blood culture bottles</b>	<p>A set of blood cultures = 2 bottles, (one aerobic bottle and one anaerobic)</p> <p>Usually “2” sets of blood cultures are ordered. <i>This may be written (blood cultures X 2).</i></p> <p><b>“2” sets = 4 bottles, 2 bottles from each site.</b></p>	<p><i>Drawing from two sites will help determine if a positive culture is a contaminant or a true pathogen causing illness.</i></p> <p>Peripheral draws are preferred. Avoid drawing blood from central lines. Notify house officer after 2 unsuccessful attempts.</p>
<b>Preparation of the tops of the culture bottles</b>	<p>After removing the tops of the blood culture bottles swab the *septum with alcohol and allow to dry.</p>	<p><i>Do not use betadine or **CHG to clean off the bottles, it will disintegrate the septum. Clean the bottle septum with alcohol. Place bottles on sterile towel to ensure the septum remains sterile until blood is inserted into the bottle.</i></p>
<b>Preparation of the skin</b>	<p>The patient’s skin should be wiped with 70% isopropyl and then swabbed with Chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG).</p> <p>Povidone-iodine may be used for patients who are allergic to CHG.</p>	<p><i>Using a circular motion, starting closest to area of draw and fanning outward. Do not cross back into the sterile skin prep area.</i></p> <p><i>The CHG must be allowed to dry to achieve maximum antimicrobial effectiveness.</i></p>
<b>Amount of blood in each bottle</b>	<p>Optimal amount 8 to 10 ml of blood in each bottle (aerobic and anaerobic) Or 3 ml. maximum in peds bottle used alone</p>	<p><i>“volume of blood seems to be the single most important factor affecting yield from the culture.....to overcome the small number of bacteria commonly associated with most bacteremias.....”</i></p>

\* Septum = enclosing material on top of the blood culture bottle

\*\*CHG = Chlorhexidine Gluconate