

## GUIDELINES FOR SPECIMEN COLLECTION - SUSPECTED CHOLERA

Please follow the instructions below for specimen collection and note the specific requirements for specimens for cholera.

**NOTE:** the typical “rice water” stool is not present in many cases of cholera.

### FOR SUSPECTED CHOLERA

**CHOLERA CULTURE SHOULD BE SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED ON THE SPECIMEN REQUEST FORMS.** A stool or a rectal swab must be collected as outlined below. Stool specimens must be placed in Cary-Blair medium if a delay of  $\geq 2$  hours will occur before processing. **RECTAL SWABS MUST ALWAYS BE PLACED IN CARY-BLAIR TRANSPORT MEDIUM** regardless of the time to processing. **SPECIMENS MUST THEN BE REFRIGERATED UNTIL TRANSPORT ARRIVES.**

#### Placing stool in Cary-Blair transport medium – THIS SHOULD BE DONE IF SPECIMEN CANNOT BE PROCESSED WITHIN 2 HOURS (SEE PICTURES)

1. A small amount of stool can be collected by inserting a sterile, cotton tipped swab into the stool in the green topped container and rotating it.
2. If mucous and shreds of intestinal epithelium are present, these should be sampled with the swab.
3. Immediately insert the swab into the transport medium. (The transport medium should have been chilled for 1 to 2 hours, if possible.)
4. The swab should be pushed completely to the bottom of the tube of transport medium
5. The top portion of the stick touching the fingers should be broken off and discarded.
6. Replace the screw cap and tighten firmly. Place labels on the bottle of transport medium AND the initial container in which the stool was collected and send BOTH to the lab. Place the Cary-Blair and the container in a refrigerator or cold box until collected. **CHOLERA CULTURE SHOULD BE SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED ON THE SPECIMEN REQUEST FORMS.**

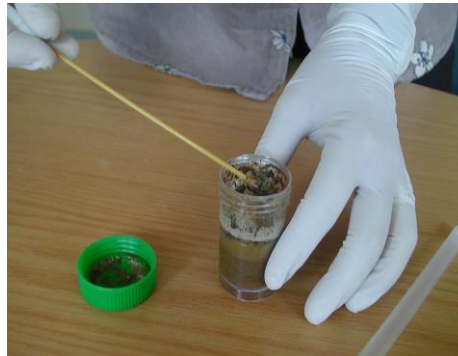
#### Method of collection FOR RECTAL SWAB:

- Moisten the swab in sterile transport medium (Cary-Blair)
- Insert swab gently into the rectal sphincter 2-3cm. and rotate to sample anal crypts. Remove swab and check for **visible faeces**.
- Immediately insert the swab into the transport medium (SEE PICTURES) and deliver to laboratory promptly. If delays are anticipated, the swab in transport medium can be refrigerated. **DO NOT FREEZE.**

**1. Cary Blair available from labs**



**2. Take small amount of stool using swab**



**3. Push swab to bottom of Cary Blair bottle**



**4. Leave swab in bottle and break off top of stick**



**5. Close lid securely and label both containers with patient details**

Laboratory test request should state:  
Stool/Rectal swab for MC&S AND CHOLERA



**IF THERE WILL BE A DELAY  
IN TRANSPORT REFRIGERATE  
UNTIL TRANSPORT ARRIVES  
– DO NOT FREEZE**

**FOR ANY SUSPECTED OUTBREAKS OR SUSPECTED CHOLERA CASES PLEASE NOTIFY THE LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT URGENTLY BY TELEPHONE AND INFORM THE INFECTION CONTROL SISTER IN YOUR FACILITY.**

**FOR ANY FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

**NICD Outbreak Hotline (24HRS) 082 883 9920**

**Prof Blumberg: 082 807 6770 or Dr Kerrigan McCarthy: 079 871 7278 or Ms Genevieve**

**Ntshoe: 082 805 9085 or Dr Vivien Essel: 082 940 4780**