



Specimen Type and Culture Media Table

Introduction

Specimens received in the laboratory must be plated on appropriate culture media to isolate the microorganisms suspected of causing infection. The selection of culture media to plate is based on the human body site of the infection and the suspected microorganism causing the infection. The table below provides examples of recommended media that can be plated to recover microorganisms from a particular body site. Selection of types and forms can vary, depending on the laboratory protocol and availability.

Specimen Type	Culture Media Used
Cerebral spinal fluid (CSF)	BAP, CHOC
Gastrointestinal tract	BAP, MAC, HE or XLD*, CAMPY, GN Broth or SF Broth*, SMAC, chromogenic culture medium**, TCBS (<i>Vibrio</i> spp.), SS*
Genital	BAP, CHOC, TM/ML*
Respiratory tract	BAP, CHOC, MAC, chromogenic culture medium ** (MRSA)
Tissue	BAP, CHOC, MAC, C-CNA or PEA*, THIO, AnaBAP***
Urine	BAP, MAC, chromogenic culture medium **
Wound or abscess	BAP, CHOC, MAC, C- CNA or PEA*, AnaBAP***

*Some of these media perform the same function and one or more may be used, depending on a laboratory's protocols.

** Chromogenic culture medium formulations vary according to their use – that used for stools differs from that used to detect MRSA or urinary tract pathogens.

*** AnaBAP may have different formulations that are used based on a laboratory's protocols.

Legend

- AnaBAP = anaerobic blood agar
- BAP = blood agar
- CAMPY = Campylobacter agar
- CHOC = chocolate agar
- C-CNA (CNA) = Columbia colistin nalidixic acid agar
- Chromogenic culture medium = CHROMagar™ (an often-used brand)
- GN broth or SF broth = Gram-negative broth/selenite F broth
- HE = Hektoen enteric agar
- MAC = MacConkey agar
- PEA = phenylethyl alcohol agar
- SMAC = MacConkey-Sorbitol (Sorbitol-MacConkey) agar
- SS = Salmonella Shigella agar
- TCBS = thiosulfate citrate bile salts sucrose agar
- THIO = thioglycollate broth
- TM/ML = Thayer-Martin agar or Martin-Lewis agar

- XLD = xylose lysine deoxycholate agar