

Routine Microscopy

KOH Preparation

In this training video, you will learn the proper technique for performing a potassium hydroxide or KOH preparation. This test is used to detect the presence of yeast in a specimen. In this video, we will be examining a vaginal specimen for the presence of yeast. For this procedure, you will need the following materials and equipment: personal protective equipment, a sharps container, a biological waste container and bag, sterile microscope slides, a sterile plastic pipette, glass coverslips, a pencil or slide marker, and 10% potassium hydroxide (KOH).

To begin the procedure, transfer one drop or ten microliters of the specimen to a sterile labeled microscope slide. Without touching the specimen with the dropper tip, add one drop or ten microliters of 10% KOH directly to the drop of the specimen on the slide. Carefully, place a cover slip over the specimen KOH solution on the microscope slide.

Using a bright-field microscope, focus on the slide using the 10X objective. Scan at least ten fields. Use the 40X high power objective to identify morphologic characteristics. If yeast forms or pseudohyphae are seen, they can only be reported as yeast present since identification of genus and species is not possible in a KOH preparation.

Follow your laboratory's policy for reporting the results.