

KOH Procedure

Introduction

The KOH (Potassium hydroxide) procedure is a method used to examine specimens for yeast. KOH serves as an enzymatic agent that breaks down debris in a specimen, such as epithelial cells and WBCs, to view yeast or pseudohyphae.

Supplies

1. Personal protective equipment
2. Sharps container
3. Biological waste container and bag
4. Sterile microscope slides
5. Sterile pipettes
6. Glass coverslips
7. Potassium hydroxide (KOH)

Instructions

1. Mix the specimen and saline solution gently.
2. Transfer 10 μ L of specimen solution to a clean, labeled microscope slide.
3. Using a clean pipette, add one drop (10 μ L) of 10% KOH directly to the drop of specimen on the slide.
4. Hold the slide at room temperature for 5 to 30 minutes after the addition of KOH, depending on the specimen type, to allow digestion to occur.
5. Place a coverslip over the slide.
6. Focus the slide and scan at least 10 fields using low power (10X).
7. Examine detail with higher dry power (40X).

NOTE: The slide is held at room temperature for 5 to 30 minutes after the addition of KOH, depending on the specimen type, to allow digestion to occur. Low/brief heat can sometimes be added to speed up the action of the KOH on the specimen.

