

'Danger of Infection' Samples

Reason for labelling

To comply with national Health and Safety guidance and to alert laboratory staff that the specimen may require processing differently.

What is a “high risk” (Danger of Infection) specimen?

Clinical judgement must be used to label specimens correctly, and the onus for this is on the requestor. Specimens from the following will require “Danger of Infection” labelling:

- patients with proven infection with a Hazard Group 3 (HG3) pathogen (see appendix) e.g. hepatitis B and C, HIV, tuberculosis and other mycobacteria, typhoid, brucella and anthrax
- Patients suspected of having a HG3 pathogen (information from clinical history and examination e.g. injecting drug user, haemophiliac, vCJD)
- a patient who is part of an ongoing outbreak caused by a HG3 pathogen.
- Inmates of Her Majesties' Prisons

Specimens from the following do **not** require “Danger of Infection” labels:

- patients with MRSA.

If there is doubt as to whether a specimen is “high risk”, please contact the microbiology laboratory. **On no account should specimens be taken from patients suspected of having any pathogen in Hazard Group 4, e.g. viral haemorrhagic fever (Lassa, Marburg, Ebola and Congo-Crimean), or Hendra or Nipah viruses without prior consultation with the on-call medical microbiologist/virologist.**

Handling “Danger of Infection” specimens

“Danger of Infection” labels should have black print on a yellow background, and should be self-adhesive. A label must be placed on the high-risk specimen container and its request form, which must give sufficient clinical information to enable the experienced laboratory staff who will receive it to know what special precautions are necessary in the laboratory. The request form may be folded so that the information need not be conspicuous to other people, but the “Danger of Infection” label must be clearly visible.

The specimen container must be placed in an individual transparent plastic bag, which should then be sealed. The specimen then will be transported in accordance with The Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road Regulations 1996 (CDG Road) and The Carriage of Dangerous Goods (Amendment) Regulations 1999 (CDG(Amendment))

Specimens

Specimens from patients known or suspected to be suffering from the following clinical conditions/micro-organisms must have “Danger of Infection” labels on both specimen and request form. This list is not exhaustive.

Bacteria

Anthrax (*Bacillus anthracis*)
 Bacillary dysentery (*Shigella dysenteriae* type 1)
 Brucellosis (*Brucella* species)
 Ehrlichiosis (*Ehrlichia* species)
E. coli O157/VTEC
 Glanders/Melioidosis (*Burkholderia/Pseudomonas mallei and pseudomallei*)
 Plague (*Yersinia pestis*)
 Q fever (*Coxiella burnetti*)
Rickettsia species
 Tuberculosis and *Mycobacterium* species
 Tularaemia (*Francisella tularensis*)
 Typhoid and paratyphoid (*Salmonella typhi* and *paratyphi*)

Viruses

Dengue
 Hantaviruses
 Hepatitis (unknown cause, hepatitis B, C, D, E and G)
 HIV/HTLV
 Rabies
 Yellow fever

Any pyrexial returning traveller (from non viral haemorrhagic fever area)

Also Transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (CJD, vCJD etc)

Parasites

Echinococcus species
Leishmania species
 Falciparum malaria (*Plasmodium falciparum*)
Naegleria species
 Pork tapeworm (*Taenia solium*)
 Sleeping sickness (*Trypanosoma* species)

Fungi

Blastomyces dermatitidis
Cladophialophora bantana
Coccidioides immitis
Histoplasma species
Paracoccidioides brasiliensis
Penicillium marneffe