

The West Suffolk Hospital (WSH) microbiology laboratory is open:

Monday – Friday between 09:00 – 18:30, and

Saturdays, Sundays & Bank Holidays between 09:00 – 17:00 unless notified differently in advance.

Specimens that require urgent testing outside these times need to be sent to the microbiology laboratory at Addenbrooke's Hospital. The following outlines how to arrange this. **Please read this carefully and follow the instructions** as this pathway has been developed to try and reduce the risks associated with processing urgent samples at an off-site laboratory. We ask you to follow it to prevent errors which could impact on patient safety.

Do not send specimens to Addenbrooke's after 07.30 am.

Instead, put the sample in the "urgent microbiology box" in the WSH laboratory sample reception & ensure that the microbiology lab is contacted at 9am (ext. 3266) so that the specimen can be processed immediately.

Please note that the responsibility for arranging the testing and the packaging of samples lies with the requesting doctor (not the Biomedical Scientists in the WSH Blood Sciences laboratory or the switchboard operators).

There is a laminated copy of this procedure attached to the wall outside the microbiology laboratory. It is also available in the Microbiology section of the Pathology Services Handbook on the Pink Book.

Accessing Clinical Microbiology advice out of hours

The WSH Consultant Microbiologists provide clinical advice for urgent queries out of hours on a rotational basis and can be contacted via WSH switchboard.

SPECIMEN TYPES

Only urgent samples are usually processed out of hours e.g. CSFs, joint aspirates.

Urgent paediatric urine samples may be requested up to 22:00. Faeces samples are not processed overnight.

Non-urgent specimens may be brought to WSH pathology laboratory specimen reception (as happens currently) where they can be stored at 4°C, if appropriate, until normal opening times.

++ALL MICROBIOLOGY SAMPLES MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A REQUEST FORM++
If you cannot print a form from eCare complete a blue paper request form by hand.

CSFs

Request samples on eCare and print the request form (or complete blue paper request forms by hand if eCare malfunctions).

Send labelled bottles 1 & 3 to Addenbrooke's Microbiology Department with a request form (follow the steps in the flowchart).

Bottle 2 must be taken to the WSH Biochemistry lab with a blood glucose sample (yellow top).

If only 1 bottle of CSF is available, the requesting doctor must decide which test takes priority and act accordingly.

Please note, if **xanthochromia** testing is needed, please discuss the sample requirements in advance of the lumbar puncture with the Biochemistry lab as they will need a separate bottle, with the sample protected from light, for this.

JOINT ASPIRATES

Request samples on eCare and print 2 forms. Collect sample in 2 separate sterile universals. Remember to fully label both bottles.

Contact Addenbrooke's Microbiology as per the flowchart on page 4 and send one bottle with a request form to Addenbrooke's.

Take the other bottle and request form to WSH pathology laboratory specimen reception and place in the "urgent microbiology box"; the WSH Microbiology laboratory will examine the sample for crystals the following morning.

If it is only possible to collect one sample and an urgent microscopy and culture is needed overnight but crystal microscopy is also required then please write clearly on the request form "Return to WSH for crystals". Please note there is only routine return transport from Addenbrooke's to WSH on Monday-Friday (excluding Bank Holidays).

Any aspirates that are put into blood culture bottles should remain at WSH.

ORTHOPAEDIC REVISION TISSUES

On the rare occasions where these are performed overnight, please do not routinely send all the samples to Addenbrooke's for processing:

- The revision tissues and any aspirates that are put into blood culture bottles should remain at WSH.
- Any pus or aspirates that are put into sterile universal containers can be sent to Addenbrooke's for an urgent Gram stain, if needed.

ASCITIC FLUID

Collect the sample in a sterile universal and send to Addenbrooke's for urgent microscopy & culture (see flowchart). Any sample collected into blood culture bottles should be sent to WSH pathology laboratory sample reception and the microbiology lab will process the sample the next morning. A request form should accompany all samples.

CORNEAL SCRAPES

Agar plates and slides are available in the fridge in the Day Surgery Unit and access can be obtained via the porters out of hours.

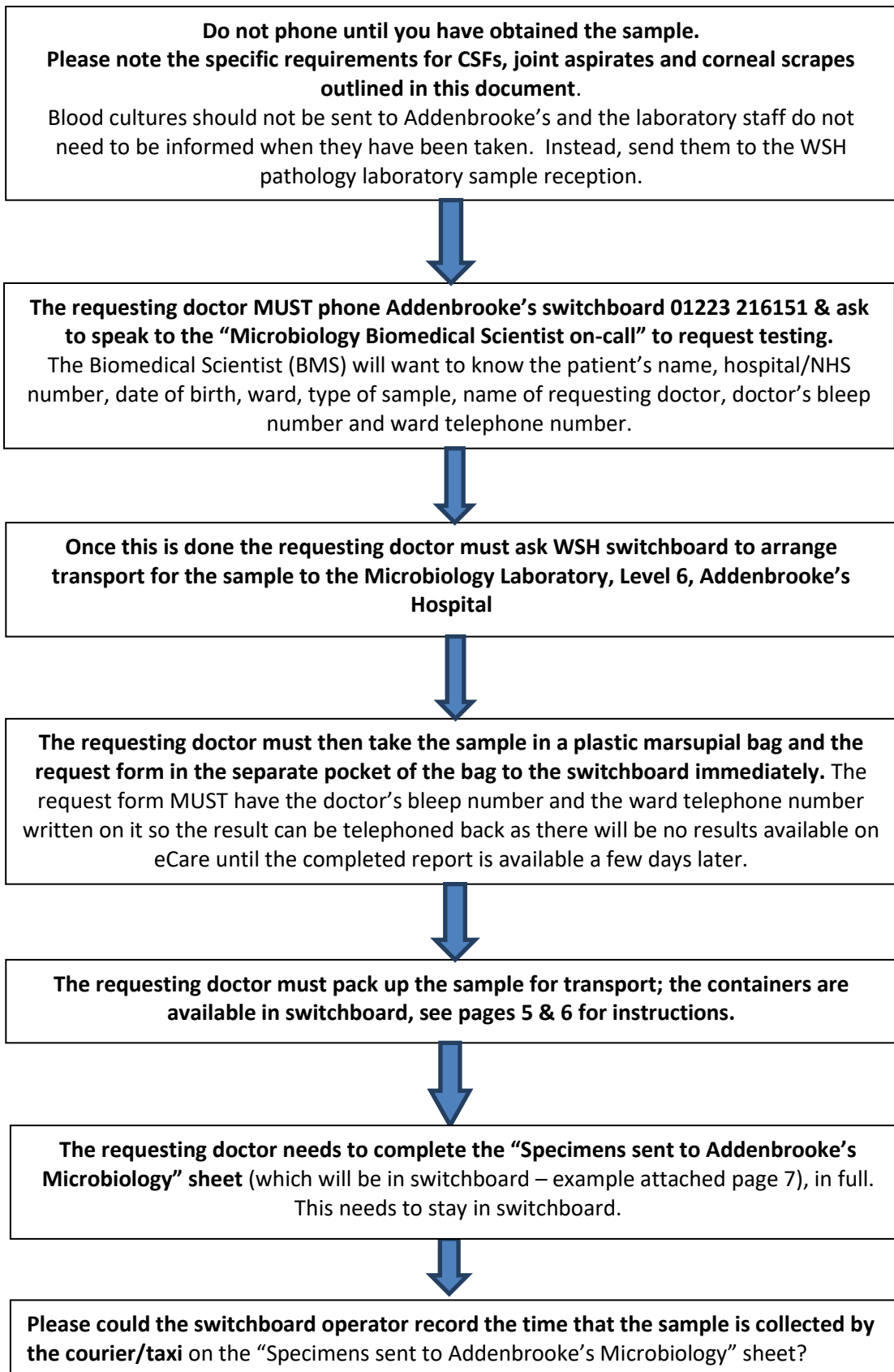
If an urgent Gram stain is required overnight please follow the flowchart on page 4 which outlines how to arrange this - send only the slide (in the slide carrier) to Addenbrooke's Microbiology. The inoculated plates and swabs should be sent to WSH pathology laboratory sample reception and the microbiology lab will process the sample the next morning.

If an urgent Gram stain is not required overnight please send all the samples (slide in slide carrier, inoculated plates and swabs) to the WSH pathology laboratory sample reception and the microbiology lab will process the sample the next morning.

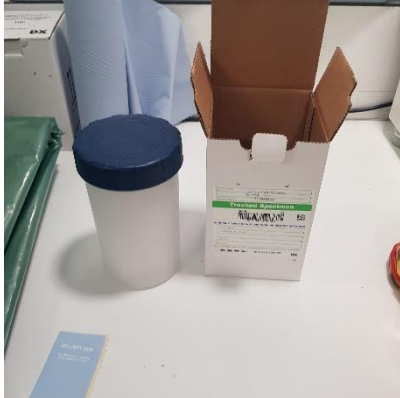
ALL OTHER URGENT SAMPLES - follow the flowchart.

++ALL MICROBIOLOGY SAMPLES MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A REQUEST FORM++
If you cannot print a form from eCare complete a blue paper request form by hand.

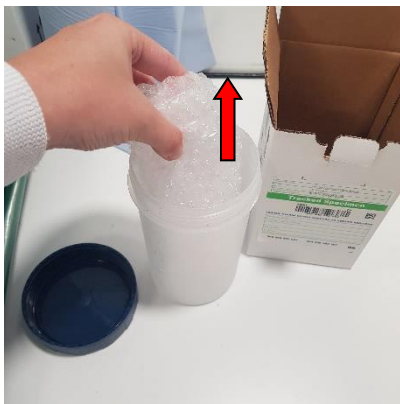
Urgent sample requiring microbiological testing outside normal laboratory opening times.



How to Package the Sample for Safe Transport



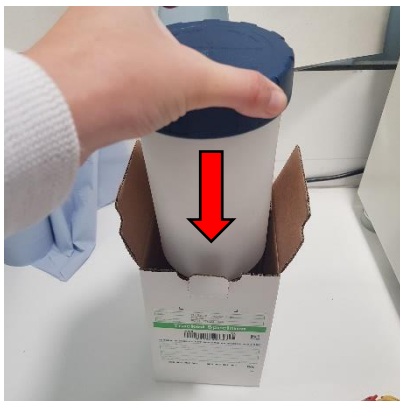
1. Remove the rigid plastic container and the security seal sticker from the cardboard box.



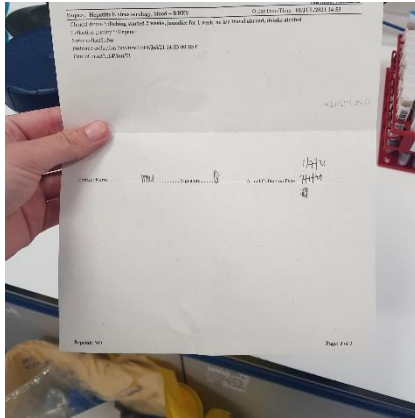
2. Remove the 'bubble-wrap' bag from the plastic container



3. Place the sample within its marsupial plastic bag into the 'bubble-wrap' bag.
Put this into the rigid plastic container and screw on the lid.



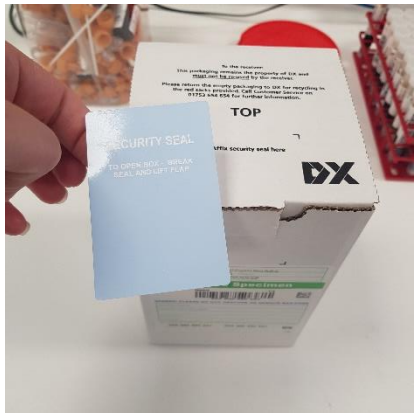
4. Put the plastic container containing the sample back into the cardboard box



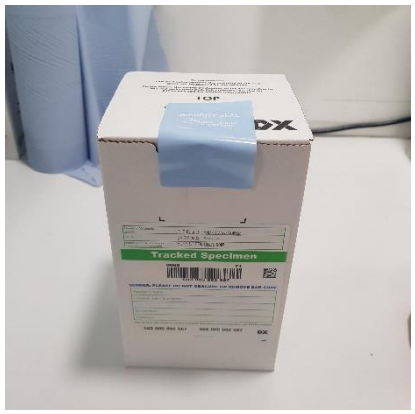
5. You **MUST** include an appropriately completed request form including your contact number so the result can be phoned to you.



6. Put the request form into the cardboard box next to the plastic container.



7. Close the lid of the cardboard box and apply:
a) the security seal sticker and
b) a printed address label for Addenbrooke's laboratory (available from switchboard)



8. Sample is now ready to be transported to Addenbrooke's microbiology

“Specimens transported to Addenbrooke’s Microbiology” sheet – kept at switchboard

							LAB USE ONLY	
Date & time of arrival at switchboard	Patient’s MRN	Patients name	Ward	Sending doctor’s name and Bleep no.	Sample type	Time picked up by courier	Scanned request form received (date &time)	Final report received (date &time)