

## Reference Sheet for Blood Culture Draws

Blood Cultures are drawn to identify a pathogen that causes an infection such as sepsis, endocarditis, or a fever of unknown origin.

In order to identify the pathogen in an effective and timely way the policy and procedure for obtaining the blood cultures must be followed which is located in the Specimen Collection Manual issued by the Department of Laboratory Medicine and is found on each unit.

Focus	Fact	Rationale
<b>Number of blood culture bottles</b>	<p>A set of blood cultures = 2 bottles, (one aerobic bottle and one anaerobic)</p> <p>Usually "2" sets of blood cultures are ordered. <i>This may be written (blood cultures X 2).</i></p> <p><b>"2" sets = 4 bottles, 2 bottles from each site.</b></p>	<p><i>Drawing from two sites will help determine if a positive culture is a contaminant or a true pathogen causing illness.</i></p> <p>At least one set should be from a peripheral site.</p>
<b>Preparation of the tops of the culture bottles</b>	<p>After removing the tops of the blood culture bottles swab the septum with alcohol.</p>	<p><i>Do not use betadine, it will disintegrate the septum.</i></p>
<b>Preparation of the skin</b>	<p>The patient's skin should be wiped with 70% isopropyl and then swabbed with betadine or swabbed with chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG).</p>	<p><i>The betadine must be allowed to dry to achieve maximum antimicrobial effectiveness.</i></p> <p><i>After the blood cultures are drawn the betadine may be washed off the patient's skin to avoid excessive drying and irritation.</i></p> <p><i>The CHG must be allowed to dry to achieve maximum antimicrobial effectiveness.</i></p>
<b>Amount of blood in each bottle</b>	<p>Optimal amount 8 to 10 ml of blood in each bottle.</p>	<p><i>"volume of blood seems to be the single most important factor affecting yield from the culture.....to overcome the small number of bacteria commonly associated with most bacteremias....."</i></p>