

Appendix C: Physician Information: Blood Cultures, Ordering, Procurement and Transport

1. Blood culture sets refer to the combination of blood culture bottles or tubes (usually a combination of an aerobic and anaerobic bottle) into which blood from a single venipuncture or line draw is inoculated.
2. When ordering blood cultures, authorized prescribers must specify the number of blood culture sets to be obtained, their timing, the site the culture is to be obtained from, and the type(s) of culture(s) sought.
3. For adults, a minimum of two blood culture sets, but no more than 4 blood culture sets are to be obtained within a 24 hour period. Specific directions are found in Appendix A. A blood volume of 8-10 ml per bottle is necessary to avoid false negative results. For children, consult the revised appendix B which provides guidance for volume and number of blood cultures based upon the weight of the child.
4. When obtaining blood cultures prepare the phlebotomy site with Chlorhexidine Frepp unless it is contraindicated in a given patient. New blood culture bottles are being introduced. For inoculation from peripheral sites, a new vacutainer butterfly device is provided. For central line blood cultures, a vacutainer blood transfer device with a female adapter (pink luer) is used. Both greatly simplify the procurement process.
5. The new bottles are made of glass and must be transported to the laboratory in the provided protective netting.
6. Consult an ID physician or call the Microbiology Laboratory when rare organisms such as Brucella, Campylobacter or Bartonella are suspected.