

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR HANDLING AFTER HOURS HISTOLOGY SPECIMENS

Histology specimens will rapidly decay without proper fixation! It is important that any specimens arriving after-hours without formalin be handled promptly and properly. If your question about adding formalin to a specimen is not answered here, please contact the Pathologist on-call immediately for instructions.

ATTENTION: If a BVH operator contacts main lab alerting there is an alarm in Histology, the on-call Pathologist should be contacted immediately! The SBAR log should be completed for all specimens handled by non-Histology staff.

Specimen Types and Directions:

1. **Placentas**- Please check the container for a sticker (white or neon yellow) that signifies whether or not chromosome studies are needed. If no studies are requested, the placenta must be completely covered and submerged in formalin. Add enough formalin to the large specimen container to fill it at least 2/3 to 3/4 full. Please gently rotate the specimen container as you fill it, to loosen the specimen from the bottom of the container so formalin can flow around it. A paper towel can be added atop the specimen in the container to help keep the placenta submerged. If chromosome studies ARE needed the specimen should be left in the blue bucket on the Histology counter.



Suggested minimum “fill level” for Placentas

2. **Products of conception (POC's)** - If chromosome studies are needed, add sterile saline to prevent smaller specimens from drying out and leave in the blue bucket on the Histology counter. If no chromosomes are needed, add enough formalin to properly cover and fix the specimen. A disposal/consent form for testing is required and should arrive with the specimen. NOTE: Pathologists do not need contacted.

3. **Fallopian tubes**- Specimen(s) will arrive in saline. Dispose of any excess saline and completely cover the specimen(s) with formalin.
4. **Heart leaflets and carotid plaque**- Add enough formalin to completely cover the specimen for proper fixation.
5. **Intrauterine device (IUD)**- This is considered a foreign body and does not need formalin added. Place the specimen on the Histology counter.
6. **Muscle/nerve/kidney biopsies** – Do not add formalin and contact a Pathologist immediately.
7. **Stones for analysis**- These are processed without fixation and will arrive dry. Do not add formalin and place on the Histology specimen counter.
8. **Toes/Fingers/Bone biopsies**- After cultures are completed for microbiology (when requested), add formalin. A disposal form is required and should arrive with toe/finger specimens. It is important all microbiology cultures have been completed before adding any formalin to these types of specimens.
9. **Amputations**-These will arrive wrapped in a biohazard bag and may or may not need testing. If pathology testing is requested, place the specimen(s) inside the refrigerator. Please put the requisition in a visible place so the specimen can be handled promptly when Histology staff returns. When testing is performed, a disposal form is required and should arrive with the specimen. If no testing is needed, the specimen should be placed directly in the trash by surgery personnel. A completed disposal form is not needed when no testing is requested. NOTE: The appropriate trash for amputations is underneath the counter in the back room right next to our recycler. It is a large cardboard container with a biohazard symbol on it.
10. **All other tissue which arrives fresh** – It must be determined if cultures, frozen section, flow cytometry, or other testing that is *not routine permanent histology* is needed before formalin is added to the container. Contact a Pathologist for further instructions.

Additional information:

1. Formalin is kept in a large cardboard “cube” and also in a plastic carboy on the shelves above the grossing tables. Gloves and face shields are available and located nearby. Larger or extra specimen containers are located in the cabinets behind/below the specimen drop-off counter.
2. The on-call Pathologist can be identified by checking the Pathologist’s schedule posted to the left of the main grossing table. Contact numbers are posted near the computer in the grossing area.
3. Complete specimen procedures and policies are located in QMS.