



Culturable Swab Sampling Guide



Benefits

- The culture swab is inexpensive and surfaces can be quickly sampled.
- A useful test for initial site sampling.
- Species level identification possible.
- Viability of fungi is determined.

Disadvantages

- Areas of fungal growth are often small and scattered, so they may not all be picked up. Taking multiple samples will help overcome this problem.
- Health problems related to indoor microbial growth are generally caused by the inhalation of substantial numbers of airborne spores, sometimes over a long period of time. The presence of biological materials on a particular surface may not be a direct indication of what is in the air.
- This method detects only viable spores and hyphae but cannot detect nonviable or difficult to culture fungi. It is advisable to combine direct exam samples with culture methods if knowing the presence of non-viable fungi is important to your project.
- Cultures cannot distinguish between spores, hyphae and other fungal cells; the results are reported as colony forming units.

Materials

- Sterile culturette/swab with appropriate buffer solution to collect and transport specimen (provided at your request by EMSL).
- Latex/nitrile gloves

Sample Collection

1. Wearing gloves, remove swab from packaging material.
2. Remove plug from media tube.
3. Swab the desired area thoroughly, rolling the swab lightly back and forth over sampling area.
4. Insert the swab in the tube, firmly close cap, and label appropriately.
5. For quantitative culture reporting, the area swabbed needs to be entered on the chain of custody.

Complete an EMSL Chain of Custody (COC), available on our website (www.emsl.com), detailing client name and information, project name or number, sample #, and a description of the area.

Sample Shipment

- Place samples in a cooler with reusable ice packs
- Overnight shipping recommended