

# MRSA Collection/Shipping Guidelines



**Sample:** Swab of solid surface, water collected in a sterile bottle with sodium thiosulfate neutralizer.

**Method:** Culture for methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) using selective media.

**Collection:**

Swabs and sterile bottles with neutralizer are available free of charge from U.S. Micro-Solutions, call 724-853-4047. *Do not use "Q-tips" or other cotton swabs intended for personal use. These swabs are not appropriate for environmental sampling.*

*Swab*

1. Wearing gloves, peel down the swab wrapper about 1 inch.
  - ▲ *Apply strict aseptic technique when collecting samples.*
2. Remove the plug from the media tube by twisting; discard the plug.
3. Remove the swab from the wrapper and insert it into the media tube.
4. Squeeze the bottom of the tube until the liquid in the sponge wets the swab.
5. Rub the pre-moistened swab vigorously over the desired sampling area.
6. Insert the swab into the media tube and firmly close the cap.

*Water*

1. Wearing gloves, collect a 100 mL water sample in a bottle with sodium thiosulfate neutralizer.
2. Fasten lid tightly and invert bottle to mix.
3. If bottle was submerged in water during collection, sanitize the outside of the bottle with an alcohol wipe to prevent cross-contamination of samples.
4. If collecting samples from more than one location, wear disposable gloves and change after each sample.

**Shipping:**

1. Clearly label each sample with a Sample Number and complete the Chain of Custody (COC).
2. Place the swabs in a Ziploc bag in a box with sufficient packing material to prevent damage, along with the COC. Use separate bags for swab and water samples.
3. Ship samples Monday through Friday for receipt within 24 hours of collection.