

# BLOOD CULTURE

## SAMPLE REQUIRED:

- Whole blood in a blood culture medium bottle
- CSF or joint fluid in a blood culture medium bottle (using the same principles described below)

## Collection Protocol

- Ideally the blood should be collected prior to antibiotic therapy, as the likelihood of a positive blood culture result is significantly reduced in patients receiving antibiotics.
- Culture of 2-4 blood samples taken during a 24-48 hour period may be necessary to obtain a positive result. If the animal is intermittently febrile, specimens should be collected when the body temperature spikes.
- Blood culture medium bottle:
  - Before use, bottles should be stored at 18°C to 25°C.
  - Check the expiry date shown on the bottle label.
  - Before use, examine the broth for turbidity (which may indicate contamination). Discard if there is any evidence of turbidity.
  - The ideal (and maximum) volume of blood to be collected is 4 mL (for the BacT/ALERT PF Plus supplied by ASAP), though smaller volumes of blood can be used. The more blood collected (without overfilling the bottle), the greater the likelihood of bacterial recovery.
- Prepare the site of collection as for a surgical site (70% ethanol should be allowed to act for at least 30 seconds).
- Prepare the blood culture bottle: Remove the plastic flip-off cap and disinfect the exposed part of the rubber stopper (70% ethanol should be allowed to act for at least 30 seconds).
- Collect blood by venipuncture using a strict aseptic technique and sterile equipment.
- Immediately transfer blood to the blood culture bottle: aseptically inject a maximum volume of 4 mL of blood through the central ring of the rubber stopper.
- After inoculation of the bottle, disinfect the exposed part of the rubber stopper.
- Thoroughly mix the blood with the medium in the bottle.
- Write identification details on the bottle including patient name, specimen and date and time of inoculation.
- Keep the inoculated blood culture bottle at room temperature. Do NOT refrigerate.
- Transport to the laboratory as soon as possible.

## Note

A strict aseptic collection technique is critical. Contaminants from the animal's skin or other external sources may give misleading results or mask significant bacteria.