

CHILDLAB

Guide to Laboratory Services

VIRAL CULTURE INCLUDING HERPES SIMPLEX CULTURE

I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

A number of viral infections are common among pediatric patients. Depending on the particular infection, diagnosis is best accomplished by one or a variety of techniques including culture, direct antigen testing by FA or EIA, serology and PCR. **If one is not familiar with the best method or methods to use, it is always best to call ChildLab before tests are ordered and specimens collected.**

II. SPECIMEN COLLECTION A viral collection kit with swabs and M4 transport medium is available by calling ChildLab. The kit contains brief instructions for proper collection of specimens from various body sites.

Specimens for viral culture which are commonly collected on outpatients include skin lesions for HSV or VZV, cervical or vaginal cultures for HSV, conjunctival cultures for HSV or adenovirus, and respiratory tract cultures (throat, NP, nasal wash) for HSV, adenovirus, and the respiratory viruses (RSV, flu A/B, and parainfluenza 1,2,3). It is important to remember that because viruses are intracellular pathogens, vigorous swab collections should be obtained to include cellular material.

Detection of rotavirus requires a passed stool specimen; anal swabs are not acceptable.

Consult ChildLab for information on the diagnosis of other viral infections.

- (1) Transport to laboratory **as quickly as possible, refrigerated.**