

**SUNY DOWNSTATE MEDICAL CENTER**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PATHOLOGY**  
**POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL OF BROOKLYN

BAY RIDGE

Subject: FERN TEST – AMBIOTIC FLUID  
CRYSTALLIZATION TEST

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## I. PURPOSE

To ensure that all provider performed Microscopy done at this hospital is carried out according to policy and for the maximum benefit of the patients and care providers. The testing must be performed under legal, regulatory and professional accreditation guidelines as appropriate.

## II. POLICY

All PPMP done at this hospital is the responsibility of the UHB Director of Clinical Laboratories.

## III. DEFINITIONS

Provider Performed microscopy Procedures (PPMP): Procedures that must be performed during the patient's visit by the provider or by a member of the group practice and can only be performed using Bright-field or phase contrast microscope. PPMP is a subcategory of moderately complex procedures.

## V. PROCEDURE/GUIDELINES

### **Specimen: Vaginal swab obtained from the posterior vaginal pool.**

- Avoid the use of any lubricants or antiseptics
- Use of a sterile swab and do *not* touch mucus plug
- Prepare a thin smear of a glass microscope slide by spreading evenly

### **Testing:**

- Allow the slide to air dry – *do not apply heat and do not coverslip the slide.*
- Examine the fully-dried slide microscopically, using the 10X objective.
- Observe for “fern-like” crystals. Presence of crystals indicates that the fluid is amniotic fluid.
- Record the results: Write your name, the date, time and findings on the patient record.

### **Interfering Substances/limitations:**

If present, blood, urine cervical mucus can result in false positive findings.  
False negative findings can result from prolonged rupture of membranes (>24hr).

### **Quality control:**

- Follow the procedural instructions exactly.
- There are no external (nor internal) quality controls to be performed at the unit level.

### **COMPLEXITY OF TESTING:**

	<b>Certificate</b>	<b>Requirements</b>
Waived	Waiver	Valid Certificate. Follow JCAHO/FDA standards and manufacturer's recommendations.
Provider Performed Microscope (Subcategory Moderate)	PPM	Valid PPM Certificate. Subject to less extensive moderate complexity standards of QA, QC, PTM and PT. Inspections may be at random or as a result of a complaint.
Moderate	Registration and Certificate Accreditation	Valid Certificate. Follow all applicable standards for QA, QC, PTM, PT and staff qualifications. Inspections are biennial or as a result of a complaint.
High	Registration and certificate of accreditation	Valid Certificate. Follow all applicable standards for QA, QC, PTM, PT and staff qualifications. The staff and QC standards are more stringent than in the moderate category.

#### **VI. TRAINING & COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT**

- The provider will be trained by an attending physician, deemed competent through successful completion of an on-line competency examination.
- A grade of eighty points or greater is required to pass the on-line examination.
- The attending physician monitors the trainee through six procedures and if successful, the trainee's name is provided to the Point of Care Coordinator.
- The Laboratory Director allows the provider/trainee to take the examination and certifies his/her initial competency based on a passing grade.
- The provider's competency is assessed through observation, within six months and thereafter yearly. The observation is done by a senior attending physician of the respective clinical service.
- The on-line examination is accessed through the Downstate Medical Center intranet:
  1. Log in to Prime.
  2. Click on the "Content" tab.
  3. Take the appropriate examination (Fern test competency exam).

#### **VII. REFERENCE**

Medical Center of Louisiana @ New Orleans