

**SUNY DOWNSTATE MEDICAL CENTER**  
UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL OF BROOKLYN  
POLICY AND PROCEDURE

<b>Subject:</b> <u>FERN TEST – AMNIOTIC FLUID CRYSTALLIZATION TEST</u>	<b>No.</b> <u>LAB23-I</u>
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	<b>Issued by:</b> Department of Laboratories

**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. REFERENCE**

Medical Center of Louisiana @ New Orleans

<b>Date Reviewed</b>	<b>Revision Required</b>		<b>Responsible Staff Name and Title</b>
	Yes	No	
	Yes	No	