

## GENERAL SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

### SPECIMEN SHIPMENT TO PVDL

**Shipping** - We recommend using UPS or FedEx or courier delivery with tracking for shipment of all specimens. Specimens submitted via the US postal service are routed through the main campus, which limits tracking of individual shipments, and often adds an additional day or more for specimen delivery. Make sure to satisfy packaging requirements as damaged or leaking packages may be seized and not delivered.

**Submission forms** - Include a completed submission form for each patient; please use laboratory-specific forms if submitting multiple test types. Make sure to label all specimen containers, tubes, and slides with relevant patient and site information.

**Multiple laboratory submissions** - Specimen types to different laboratories can be submitted in the same shipment. Formalin exposure will, however, negatively impact cytology slides, urine quality, and chemistry testing, so submission in a different box is ideal. If the same box is used, vapor proofing is needed. Review specimen guidelines for each laboratory/submission type.

**New clients** - If you are a new client/clinic interested in using PVDL, please call ahead to set up an account with us – this will help to expedite processing of your specimens upon arrival.

All specimens should be submitted to the specific laboratory at the addresses listed below:

**Histopathology Laboratory**

MJR-VHUP, Room 4001  
3900 Delancey Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Phone: 215.898.8857

**Clinical Laboratory/Cytology**

MJR-VHUP, Room 4101  
3900 Delancey Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Phone: 215.898.8877

**Microbiology Laboratory**

MJR-VHUP, Room 4106  
3900 Delancey Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Phone: 215.898.7858

**Clinical Parasitology Laboratory**

MJR-VHUP, Room 4108  
3900 Delancey Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Phone: 215.898.7183

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## BIOPSY SUBMISSIONS

Histopathology Laboratory

MJR-VHUP - Room 4001

3900 Delancey Street - Philadelphia, PA 19104

Phone: 215.898.8857 Fax: 215.898.0719

email: pennvethistolab@vet.upenn.edu

The anatomic pathology group at PVDL is a dedicated team of board-certified anatomic pathologists with expertise in dermatopathology, oncopathology, ocular pathology, and neuropathology. We work closely with each other through daily case consultation rounds and with our histology technicians to ensure timely and accurate diagnoses for your patients. Our biopsy as well as autopsy cases provide valuable teaching material for our anatomic pathology residents and our veterinary students.

### General guidelines for biopsy specimens

- Include submission form with each patient specimen(s).
- Specimen information - Include accurate and complete information about the number of containers and specimens per container on the submission form. Double check that the tissues in the containers match what is indicated on the submission form.
- Margins - Clearly indicate on the submission form if you have labeled margins with ink or suture (avoid placing the suture within the affected area) and the location (e.g. "caudal margin") of the labeled margin. Specify on the submission form if you would like to have margins evaluated.
- For guidelines regarding collection and/or submission of specific tissue types, please see the document 'Specific Tissue Guidelines for Biopsy Submission' and 'Optimal Skin Biopsy Technique' also available on this site.
- Formalin - A 10:1 ratio of formalin to tissue is best to achieve thorough and rapid fixation. Ensure all containers are tightly sealed to avoid formalin leaks – packages with visible leaks may not be delivered. If you don't have formalin, tissues can be submitted in saline and marked on submission form. Sample should NOT be submitted in alcohol.

The Biopsy Service has partnered with Path-Tec and is able to provide our clients with complete Biopsy collection kits for ease of collection and transport.



- Each Biopsy Collection Kit contains: Pre-filled polypropylene container with 90 ml of 10% neutral buffered formalin; Transport Box; Specimen Mailer; Biohazard Bag with Absorbent; and Box Seal.
  - The container includes a label for patient name, surgical site, doctor and date.
- To order 10% Formalin containers with mailers, please call the lab at 215.898.8857 or 215.898.7871 or fax a request to 215-898-0719.

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## **CYTOLOGY + CLINICAL PATHOLOGY SUBMISSIONS**

Clinical Pathology Laboratory

MJR-VHUP - Room 4101

3900 Delancey Street - Philadelphia, PA 19104

Phone: 215.898.8877 Fax: 215.898.9352

On-site board-certified clinical pathologists provide same-day evaluation of cytologic specimens, bone marrow, and blood from all species for specimens submitted by 4 pm (4:30 pm for stat cases) for our external clients. Feel free to contact us prior to a submission to review best options or discuss any special considerations for a case. We also welcome calls or email communication following diagnosis. Resubmissions are evaluated at no charge. The service routinely consults with other diagnostic laboratories within PVDL to discuss submitted cases. Challenging or unusual cases are reviewed by multiple pathologists in daily consult rounds.

### **General guidelines for cytology specimens**

- Use the Cytology Submission Form for submission of any specimens for cytologic evaluation.
- Fluid and blood samples should be kept cool and shipped overnight. Preparation of slides in addition to submission of fluid may be useful for cell preservation.
- Slides, preferably unstained, should be kept at room temperature (avoid extreme cold or heat); avoid exposure to formalin or formalin fumes.
- Label all slides and tubes with patient name and site of aspiration/collection.
- For critical patients, any specimen can be treated as a 'Stat' for an additional fee – denote this on submission form and/or call to let us know a status change in a patient.

### **General guidelines for clinical pathology specimens**

The Clinical Laboratory offers routine hematology, chemistry, urinalysis, coagulation, endocrine, and immunohematology/blood banking testing. This is performed by highly-skilled laboratory technicians with direct oversight by board-certified clinical pathologists.

- Use the Clinical Pathology Submission Form for information regarding available testing and specimen requirements. Results are reported same-day for specimens arriving by 5 pm.
- Whole blood samples should be kept cool and shipped overnight. Serum or plasma should be centrifuged and separated from RBCs within 30 minutes and kept cool. Citrated plasma should be kept frozen and shipped on ice packs.
- Urine should be kept cool and shipped overnight. For cytologic evaluation, consider preparation of dried sediment smear slides (unstained) and submission with fluid given the potential for cell degradation.

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## **MICROBIOLOGY SUBMISSIONS**

Microbiology Laboratory

MJR-VHUP - Room 4106

3900 Delancey Street - Philadelphia, PA 19104

Phone: 215.898.7858 Fax: 215.898.0503

The Clinical Microbiology Lab specializes in the identification of bacterial pathogens from companion animals and the determination of antimicrobial sensitivities. Our areas of expertise include pathogens of the integumentary, urinary and alimentary systems. Board-certified clinical microbiologists are available to provide consultation on test selection and antimicrobial choice for our clients.

### **General guidelines for microbiology specimens**

Primary testing options include aerobic, anaerobic, fungal/dermatophyte, and Mycobacterium cultures although other tests are available.

- All samples must be accompanied by a submission form.
- Samples should be received within 72 hours of collection to ensure the best results.
- Culturettes are the most commonly used sample transport medium. For advice on sample collection and/or appropriate sample containers please contact the lab directly.
  - Culturettes containing transport medium should not be refrigerated.
- Fluid samples (e.g. synovial, urine, bile, cavitory effusions) may be submitted on ice in a sterile container (such as a red top tube).
- Tissue may be submitted in either a culturette or sterile container in sterile saline. Never use fixatives (i.e. formalin) on tissues for culture.
- Blood cultures require specialized media. Please contact the lab before submission.
- Fungal samples may include tissue, hair or sterile toothbrush groomed over the animal.

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## **PARASITOLOGY SUBMISSIONS**

Parasitology Laboratory

MJR-VHUP - Room 4108

3900 Delancey Street - Philadelphia, PA 19104

Phone: 215.898.7183 Fax: 215.573.8115

email: [parasit@vet.upenn.edu](mailto:parasit@vet.upenn.edu)

The Clinical Parasitology Lab provides services for both companion animals and large animals. The laboratory offers fecal testing for identification of parasitic eggs and cysts including quantitative fecal egg counts as well as heartworm testing and parasite identification. Contact the laboratory for additional testing options or inquiries.

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## AUTOPSY SUBMISSIONS

The Autopsy Service at the University of Pennsylvania is primarily involved in the postmortem examination of animals that were patients of the Ryan Veterinary Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania (MJR-VHUP). These autopsies are done for academic and educational purposes. Postmortem examinations of non-VHUP patients are routinely performed by practicing veterinarians and tissues may be submitted through our Surgical Biopsy Service.

The Autopsy Service *may* perform outside (referral) autopsies for specified cases. The following guidelines will determine if a case is eligible for autopsy submission.

1. A referring veterinarian requests autopsy for a patient under their care. This must be the veterinarian who was treating the animal at or near the time of death.
2. Please note that the following are NOT accepted in any instance – forensic autopsies or rabies suspects. Any cases with likely legal implications or a rabies suspected will NOT be accepted.
3. Animals where an autopsy or partial autopsy has been performed will not be accepted.

### Autopsy Submission Guidelines

- Animals should be refrigerated (NOT frozen) as soon as possible after death. Severely autolyzed animals will not be accepted as this precludes a diagnosis.
- The referring veterinarian must contact the Chief of the Autopsy Service or the pathologist on duty prior to submission at 215.898.8857 or 215.898.7871. This is to provide relevant information about the case, and obtain permission for submission of the animal.
- Upon approval by the pathologist, an Autopsy Referral Form will be faxed or emailed to the referring veterinarian. This form **MUST** be completed and either: faxed to the Autopsy Service at 215.898.0719, emailed to the pathologist, or submitted with the animal before the autopsy will be started.
- Copies of pertinent and recent medical records should be submitted with the form.
- The animal should be dropped off at the Ryan Veterinary Hospital at Penn Vet in coordination with the pathologist on duty between 9am and 4pm, Monday-Friday.
  - Animals will not be accepted after 4 pm on weekdays, during weekends, or holidays.
- There is a minimum \$750.00 charge for each autopsy which will be billed through our surgical biopsy service. We will **only** accept payment from the veterinarian referring the autopsy. This fee includes the gross examination, histopathology, written reports and private cremation. If the referring veterinarian already has an account with our Surgical Biopsy Service, we will bill that account. An account must be created if the referring veterinarian is not a current client of our service.

- Samples for Toxicology and Bacteriology may be collected at the discretion of the pathologist on duty in consultation with the referring veterinarian. Additional charges for bacteriology and toxicology will be discussed with the referring veterinarian. Viral isolation is not available at this laboratory.
- Disposition of the body should be discussed with the client by the referring veterinarian. The ONLY option available for animals following the autopsy is private cremation. Ashes from private cremations will be sent by courier (FedEx or other) to the referring veterinarian or owner as requested.
- Owners should be aware that in some cases the autopsy will not reveal the cause of the patient's clinical signs or demise.
- All autopsy reports (verbal and written) will be directed to the referring veterinarian, NOT the owner. In most cases the pathologist on duty will call or email the referring veterinarian with a verbal report of the gross autopsy within one to two working days of the autopsy.
- A final report summarizing the gross and histological findings will be sent to the referring veterinarian within 2 to 3 weeks of the date of the autopsy.