

Surgical Biopsy Submission Guidelines

1. ALWAYS submit in 10% neutral buffered formalin.
2. Avoid freezing the tissue samples.
3. If samples are small (less than 4-6 cm in greatest thickness), do not section the tissues. Submit fixed tissue masses in their entirety when possible. If samples are larger, then sectioning in halves or quarters may be necessary to allow for proper fixation. Please call the lab should you require advice in submitting larger specimens.
4. Fix samples in adequate amounts of formalin. Ideally, the volume ratio of formalin to tissue would be 10:1. If this is not feasible, a minimum of 5-7:1 would suffice. Alternatively, tissues can be fixed in an adequate volume of formalin solution for 24 – 48 hours, removed from solution, wrapped in formalin-soaked gauze sponge, placed in a plastic bag, and sealed for shipment. This technique decreases the probability of spillage and leakage of formalin during mailing.
5. Do not add more than one specimen to a container. Label each submission as to the anatomical location of excision.
6. In cases of skin biopsies, take multiple samples, sampling the most recently arising lesions, and try to take a specimen which includes adjacent, clinically normal skin.
7. Avoid sending samples in glass bottles (they often break, leaking formalin en route). Plastic screw cap bottles should be placed in a sealable, plastic bag. Include enough material to absorb the entire volume of formalin in case of breaks or spills.
8. Send submission sheets with clinical history, signalment and working diagnoses in a separate plastic bag.