Collection and Submission Guidelines for *Bacillus anthracis* (Anthrax)

**Instructions:** The following collection and shipping instructions are intended to minimize exposure during collection, shipping and handling at the laboratory. Please follow instructions closely.

Please call the NDSU-VDL prior to shipping or dropping off your specimen at (701) 231-7527 or (701) 231-8307. Prior notification of the lab helps to ensure same day test results. Failure to notify the laboratory prior to submitting the specimen may result in a delay in test results.

**Collection Guidelines:**
- Don double exam gloves and take special precautions if you have any open wounds as most human Anthrax cases involve cutaneous infections. If possible, wear disposable gowns and boot covers. Use a needle/syringe apparatus to draw venous blood sample from a peripheral vein. If sufficient blood cannot be obtained, fresh spleen or body cavity fluid is acceptable. If none of the preferred samples are available, an ear notch can be collected and submitted in a red top tube. A minimum of 1 mL fluid or 10 grams of tissue are required for testing.
  - **Note:** Blood can be falsely negative in horses or swine. In addition to blood, submit exudate or affected lymph nodes from these species.
- Transfer the blood/fluid sample to a red top tube (plastic is preferred). *Remove the needle from the tube. Discard the needle/syringe apparatus in an appropriate sharps container; soak in approximate 10% bleach solution for 24 hours or incinerate as soon as possible. DO NOT send the needle to the laboratory with the specimen as it poses a significant risk to anyone handling the box during transport or specimen handling.* Double bag tissue samples. **Label the specimen** and place in a sealable bag with sufficient absorbent material (paper towels) to contain the fluid in case of a spill.
- Remove gloves, gown, coverall and boot covers; place in a separate container for sterilization or incineration. Sterilize instruments and other non-disposable items by either soaking in a strong bleach solution for 1 hour, autoclaving or boiling for 30 minutes.

**Packaging and Shipping Guidelines:**
- Line the bottom of the Styrofoam shipping container with paper towels or other absorbent material. Place the sealed bag with the specimen in a Styrofoam shipping container with a frozen icepack.
- Write “ANTHRAX SUSPECT” on the outside of the Styrofoam container. *Do not write this on the outer box.*
- Fill out General Submission Form. Be specific, include case history and clearly indicate the sample is from an Anthrax suspect. **Place the submission form in a sealable bag; place bag on the outside of the Styrofoam shipping container.**
- Place the Styrofoam container inside a rigid outer cardboard box. Seal outer box with packaging tape. Attach a Biological Substance Category B, UN3373 label on the outside of the box and affix shipping label/address/sender info. **Overnight shipping is recommended.**
  - **Note:** Do *not* place anything other than Anthrax suspect samples in the box. If the sample is positive, any other samples in the same container will be destroyed.

**Post Office Mail Address:**
Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory
NDSU, Dept 7691
PO Box 6050
Fargo, ND 58108-6050

**UPS/Fed ExAddress:**
Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory
4035 19th Ave N
Fargo, ND 58102

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