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Providing Quality, Time Sensitive Microbiological Testing

IMPORTANT! Roesink Microbiology Laboratories does not accept Category A Infectious Substances (Biosafety Level 3 or 4 materials or any pathogen that causes highly contagious or otherwise serious disease).

Recommended Guidelines for taking Environmental and Contact *Listeria Swabs:*

Ensure all samples are properly collected, labeled, stored and transported and employ good record-keeping.

1. Thoroughly wash hands before sampling. Put on gloves.
2. Label outside of bag with sample description, sample I.D., sample number, and date and time of sampling.
3. Open the bag containing the sponge swab and place on a sanitized surface, upright in a sanitized caddy, or have a co-worker hold it. (Note: Make sure the co-worker has cleaned and sanitized their hands and is wearing gloves.) Using aseptic technique, remove a sterile glove from its package and place on hand. Being careful not to touch the outside of the bag or any surrounding objects, remove the swab or sponge from the bag.
4. **Sponge Swab** - Swab the defined area in a back and forth "grid" to completely cover the area. Repeat perpendicular to the first sampling in the same area. Return sponge to bag and roll top over multiple times. Close by bending wire tabs inward. Place the bag containing the swab in a secondary bag (zip-lock bag) and place in cooler.
 - a. **Sponge Swab** - An appropriate area to swab with a sponge is a one square foot area (12x12 inches or 30.5x30.5 cm) or (930 cm²)
5. **Q-Tip Swab** - Moisten swab and press against the inner wall of the container to express excess liquid, using a slight rolling motion. Sample the defined area in a back and forth "grid" to completely cover the area. After the grid is done, place swab back in liquid, shake gently in the liquid, then express excess liquid into vial before repeating as follows. Repeat twice, once perpendicular, and once more diagonal to the first same area sampled. Return swab to vial and ship.
 - a. A surface area of up to 100cm² (10 x 10cm) can be swabbed.

6. After sampling, swabs must be shipped CHILLED to the laboratory. For valid results, the following points must be ensured:
 - a. Testing should begin within 48 hours of sampling, so swabs should be shipped the day of sampling.
 - b. Ship for priority overnight delivery.
 - c. Maintain temperature at 0 to 10°C (32 to 50°F) during transit.
 - d. Completely fill out a Roesink Laboratories Sample Submittal Form and place in a zip lock-bag in the shipping cooler. Make a copy of the form to keep on file for your records.

Laboratory Notes:

1. It is appropriate to swab the entire surface of equipment with sponges.
2. State the length that a floor crack should be swabbed.
3. Use pictures to help define the area.
4. Describe the size of the surface area sampled and what piece of equipment or surface area was tested on sample submittal form.
5. Clearly state if the sample was taken during production or after cleaning and sanitizing.

Swab sponges vs. Q-tip swabs.

- Sponges are optimal because they can be used on large areas.
- Swabs are best for areas that cannot be reached by a sponge (ie: small crevices, cracks, small or tight areas on manufacturing equipment, etc).