

JPC Veterinary Case Submission Guidelines



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Diagnostic Case Submissions

Eligibility

- 1) Veterinary Pathology Services of the Joint Pathology Center (JPC) offers no-cost diagnostic services for all government-owned animals (GOA) and privately-owned animals (POA) belonging to individuals who are authorized to receive DOD veterinary services. JPC also offers second opinion consultation services for military and civilian pathologists from any animal regardless of ownership.
- 2) Diagnostic materials accepted by the JPC include formalin-fixed tissue specimens, paraffin-embedded tissue specimens, stained histologic sections, cytologic preparations, radiographs and photographs. ***We do NOT accept fluid samples, any type of sample for culture, or stones (to include urinary or gallbladder stones) and we will immediately discard such samples upon receipt. We also do NOT accept tissues for rabies testing. These samples need to be sent to the Food Analysis and Diagnostic Laboratory (FADL) or a local animal health laboratory.***

Preparing specimens

- 1) Complete one copy of JPC Form VET (Veterinary Consultation Request) and forward with case material. A link to this form is located on the JPC website (<https://www.dha.mil/jpc-vetpath/>).
 - a) Include complete signalment (animal identification, species, breed, sex and age).
 - b) Include pertinent clinical information to include the anatomic location from which the specimen was collected, clinical history (including clinical signs, treatments, response to treatments, distribution of lesions, etc.) and pertinent laboratory findings.
 - c) Include a telephone number, fax number and an e-mail address where you would like to receive your results.
 - d) Any digital photos can be sent to this email address: dha.ncr.joint-path-center.mbx.askvetpath@health.mil.
- 2) Correct packaging of specimen containers is essential to prevent breakage, environmental contamination, and tissue dehydration.
 - a) ***Do not ship tissues immersed in formalin.***
 - b) Remove adequately fixed tissue specimens from formalin (after 24 to 48 hours) and wrap fixed tissue in formalin-soaked gauze sponges or place tissue in formalin-soaked cloth tissue bags.

- i) Bone specimens with sharp edges must be adequately padded with formalin-soaked gauze to prevent perforation of plastic specimen bags.
- ii) Pack formalin-fixed eyes in rigid specimen containers to prevent distortion of ocular structures.
- c) Double-bag the tissues in heavy-duty plastic bags and if available, vacuum/heat-seal wrapped tissue specimens.
- d) Each individual specimen container must be clearly labeled with the animal's name and tattoo or other identification, as applicable and if required, the tissue identity or collection site. At least two sample identifiers are required on the primary specimen bag/container, which must be listed on the Veterinary Consultation Request form.
 - i) The bags can be directly labeled using an indelible marker.
 - ii) Alternatively, an index card labeled with this information in pencil or indelible ink can be included in each bag.
 - iii) Note that many types of ink are removed by formalin vapors.
- e) Alternatively wrapped tissue specimens can be shipped inside plastic specimen jars with screw-on lids, *not snap-on lids*.
 - i) Seal the lid with several layers of plastic sealing wrap.
 - ii) Double bag specimen jars in either resealable or heat-sealed plastic bags.
 - iii) ***Do not ship tissues immersed in formalin inside plastic specimen containers.***
- f) Special precautions are needed for the preparation and shipment of cytology specimens (fine needle aspirates, impression smears, fluid preparations).
 - i) ***Do not ship cytology slides in the same container with formalin-fixed specimens.***
 - ii) As stated above we do not accept fluid or swabs for evaluation; an air-dried cytological preparation must be prepared for shipment.
 - iii) Additional guidance for collection of lymph node or blood smear samples, or submission of static cytology cases, can be found here: <https://www.dha.mil/jpc-vetpath/>
 - iv) We recommend staining and quick evaluation of cytologic

specimens for a monolayer of adequate numbers of intact, high-quality cells. Submission of stained and unstained slides is preferred.

- 3) Protect the Veterinary Consultation Request form by using sealed plastic specimen bags.

Shipping specimens

- 1) Ship containers in a sturdy cardboard box lined with two heavy-duty plastic bags.
- 2) Use adequate packing material in sufficient amounts to ensure that specimen containers remain stable during shipment and do not contact the walls of the box.
- 3) Close each plastic bag securely and seal the box with strapping or shipping tape.
- 4) Use cardboard or plastic microscope slide mailers to send cytology specimens.
- 5) **Never prepare, store, or ship cytology specimens with formalin.** This inhibits our ability to read cytologic specimens and often results in non-diagnostic specimens.
- 6) **It is strongly recommended that you ship using private couriers (e.g., UPS, FEDEX, DHL) and that you retain the courier reference tracking number to locate the sample in the event it is misdirected.**

Ship to:

Joint Pathology Center
Attn: Vet Path Service
606 Stephen Sitter Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910-1290

Case priority and turn-around-times

- 1) Surgical biopsy and cytology (glass slide) case results are reported within 3 to 10 calendar days after receipt of the case material.
- 2) Static cytology case results are reported within 2 business days after receipt of case material.
- 3) Necropsy case results are generally reported within 30 calendar days after receipt of the case material. Special situations justify a faster case turn-around-time. If this is the case, consult with the Chief, Diagnostic Services at 301-295-6207 prior to submission of the necropsy material.

- 4) Case results will be reported to the contributor by the preferred method (e-mail, mail) indicated on the Veterinary Consultation Request form.
- 5) Final reports will also be entered in VSSM *typically* within 7 business days.

Contact JPC Veterinary Pathology Services

Direct any questions about case submission and JPC Veterinary Pathology Services to the Chief, Veterinary Pathology Diagnostic Services at 301-295-6200/6207; fax 301-295-6210; or email dha.ncr.joint-path-center.mbx.askvetpath@health.mil.