Neuromuscular/EM Specimen Collection Guide

Please call the neuromuscular laboratory at 612-873-2175 to notify the lab staff of all incoming biopsies and to request fixatives. It is most helpful to notify the lab both when a biopsy is initially scheduled and again when a biopsy is about to be delivered. This is especially important for all biopsies scheduled for noon or later to ensure that there is adequate staffing at the laboratory to receive and process the specimen in a timely manner.

Phone #: 612-873-2175
Fax #: 612-904-4240
Email: EMLab@hcmed.org

Laboratory Receiving Hours:
7:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.,
Monday-Friday

What to Send:
- Neuromuscular Pathology Request Form with ordering provider’s signature
- Patient demographics and insurance face sheet
- Most recent clinic/hospital visit notes and any relevant test results
- Specimen prepared according to the following procedures

Muscle Biopsies

1. Send 2 unfixed muscle pieces lying on a tongue blade, wrapped in gauze that has been slightly moistened in saline, over wet-ice for STAT delivery. Muscle pieces should each be about 8-10 mm in diameter by 10 mm in length, or roughly the size of a pencil eraser.

2. Send a third muscle piece of a similar size (roughly the size of a pencil eraser) that is held at resting length by sutures on a piece of tongue blade immersed in 4:1 EM fixative (call the lab to request fixative).

3. If biochemical studies are anticipated, an additional piece of tissue must be frozen in liquid nitrogen after excision and sent on dry ice.
Nerve Biopsies

1. Send one piece of nerve measuring at least 10 mm (1 cm) in length wrapped in gauze that has been slightly moistened in saline.

2. Send a second piece of nerve approximately 20 mm (2 cm) in length in 3% glutaraldehyde fixative, at room temperature. Please label the proximal end of the nerve.

Shipping

Specimens must be received in the lab as soon as possible. Specimens collected within the Twin Cities metro area can be sent by our complimentary courier, TForce. To request a pick-up for fresh biopsies, you can either contact our lab directly at 612-873-2175, or call TForce at 651-644-8444 and choose STAT delivery for fresh biopsies. Please enclose all necessary paperwork with the specimen and address the package to the following address:

HCMC- Electron Microscopy Lab
825 South 8th Street, Suite LL-05
Minneapolis, MN 55404

Note- If you are sending unfixed tissue from outside of the Twin Cities metro area, please contact us for more detailed specimen preparation and shipping instructions