Muscle and Nerve Specimen
Collection Guide

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

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

- Please call the neuromuscular/EM laboratory at 612-873-2175 when a biopsy is scheduled.
- All surgeries should be scheduled before noon to ensure the biopsy will arrive in our lab by 2:30 p.m.
- Collection kits or fixative can be provided with advance notice.
- Notify our lab staff again when the biopsy is ready to be picked up.

Muscle Biopsies

Please send 3 pieces of muscle tissue in total. Two fresh pieces and one piece submitted in 4:1 glutaraldehyde EM fixative. *Do not cauterize the tissue.*

Biopsy size:

- 0.5 cm in diameter by 1.5 cm in length each

Fresh pieces (x2)

- Place each piece of muscle on a portion of tongue depressor (not tied).
- Wrap in saline moistened gauze.
- Place muscle tissue in a labeled specimen container. Place labeled container in a separate bag, on a cold pack or bag of wet ice.

Fixed piece (x1) - 4:1 glutaraldehyde EM fixative

- Place the muscle tissue on a portion of tongue depressor tied at resting length by sutures (see picture #2).
- Place muscle tissue in the labeled 4:1 glutaraldehyde EM fixative vial. Place labeled vial in a separate bag, on a cold pack or bag of wet ice.
Nerve Biopsies

Please send 2 pieces of nerve tissue in total. One piece fresh and one piece submitted in 3% glutaraldehyde EM fixative.

Biopsy size:
- 2.0 cm in length each

Fresh piece (x1)
- Place nerve tissue on a portion of tongue depressor (not tied)
- Wrap in saline moistened gauze.
- Place nerve tissue in a labeled specimen container. Place labeled container in a separate bag, on a cold pack or bag of wet ice.

Fixed piece (x1) - 3% glutaraldehyde EM fixative
- Warm fixative to room temperature before placing the nerve tissue into it.
- Suture the proximal end of the nerve.
- Place nerve tissue on a portion of tongue depressor.
- Place nerve tissue in the labeled 3% glutaraldehyde EM fixative vial. Place labeled vial in a separate bag, on a cold pack or bag of wet ice.

What to Send with the Biopsy:
- Neuromuscular Pathology Request Form with clinician’s signature or a copy of the electronic order for the biopsy.
- Contact information: direct phone number, e-mail and/or pager for the physician requesting the biopsy. (Not the surgeon)
- Patient demographics and insurance face sheet
- Most recent clinic/hospital visit notes and any relevant test results (EMG/NCS results, neurology notes, rheumatology notes, CK and aldolase lab results).

Shipping

The lab must receive the specimens as soon as possible. Specimens collected within the Twin Cities metro area can be sent by TForce, our complimentary courier. Call our lab directly at 612-873-2175 to request a pick-up. Please enclose all necessary paperwork with the specimen and address the package to the following address:

New address starting 2022:

Hennepin Healthcare Neuromuscular/EM Lab
716 S 7th Street
Suite PL.630
Minneapolis, MN 55415

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.