

PROTOCOL FOR MICROBIAL HYGIENE SCREENING OF **VETERINARY PRACTICES**

The purpose of this screen is to assess the efficiency of general cleaning protocols and to highlight areas where bacterial contamination is present and needs further attention. This is a semi-quantitative test which gives information as to the total viable bacterial load present.

Our experience of using this screen has been that it improves the general hygiene of the site and identifies areas which may previously have been unrecognised as a problem. This helps to reduce problems of wound contamination and wound breakdown.

For clinics with high counts we offer further subsidised testing to investigate the problem. This can involve identification of the bacteria present and may also involve re-swabbing areas which have given high bacterial counts after remedial cleaning

Kit contents:

10 x swabs

1 x 10cm x 10cm plastic template

4 x settle plates (2x Blood Agar, 2x Rose Bengal) - **STORE REFRIGERATED BEFORE USE**

1 x submission form (to be fully completed)

Swabbing technique:

See the attached list of suggested areas to be tested.

1. Ensure that hands have been thoroughly washed and if possible, put on a pair of sterile gloves.
2. For flat surfaces to be tested such as the floor, wall or tabletops, take out the 10cm x 10cm plastic template (optional) and clean it with surgical spirit or similar, allowing it to air dry.
3. Place the template on the area to be tested
4. Remove the swab from the pouch.
5. Rub the pre-moistened swab over the template area three times, (horizontally, vertically and diagonally), using firm pressure and twirling the swab (between thumb and forefinger) to ensure all sides of the swab has been inoculated.
6. Clearly label each swab with the area that has been swabbed and indicate if the template has been used. If you are swabbing the areas listed on the attached sheet just label the swabs 1- 10 as indicated. It is important to note whether the template has been used as this will allow for a quantitative count to be achieved.
7. Clean the template as mentioned in point 2 after each use.
8. Repeat steps 3 to 7 for each area to be tested.
9. For areas where it is not possible to use the template, such as tap handles or pump dispensers, rotate the swab over the area to be tested ensuring all sides of the swab have been inoculated.

Settle plate technique:

1. Two plates containing different types of media are provided for each area to be tested.
2. Place each petri dish on the flat surface to be tested and remove the lid so that the agar in the plate is exposed to the air.
3. Ensure that the removed lid is facing downwards so that the inner side of the lid is not exposed to the air.
4. Leave the plates for 30 minutes and if possible, ensure that staff or animals are not moving around over the surface of the exposed plate.
5. Replace the lid and seal with tape to ensure it is firmly attached.
6. Label the plate clearly indicating the area it has been used in.

SUGGESTED AREAS TO BE SAMPLED

Swabs and settle plates should be tested after normal cleaning protocols have been performed, allowing time for surfaces to air dry. **It may be useful to swab 1 or 2 areas before clean down and after clean down, such as a floor.**

Swab:	Sample:	Area to be tested:	Alternative area:
1	Template []	Reception / waiting room floor	
2	Template []	Consulting room table or floor	
3	Template []	Prep room table	
4	Template []	Prep room floor	
5	Swab	Prep room sink, soap dispenser or taps	
6	Template []	Kennel floor or wall	
7	Template []	Operating theatre table	
8	Template []	Operating theatre floor	
9	Swab	Light fitting above operating table	
10	Swab	Operating theatre sink, soap dispenser or taps	
	Settle plates	Prep room	
	Settle plates	Operating room	

- Please indicate if template has been used
- Please indicative alternative area sampled if not those stated in the table above.

LABORATORY SUBMISSION FORM - MICROBIAL HYGIENE SCREEN

Name of Vet Practice:	
Contact name:	
Full postal address:	
Telephone:	
Fax:	
Email:	
Preferred method of report:	Post fax email

Date samples collected:

Samples collected by:

Date posted:

Swabs and settle plates should be returned to the laboratory on the day they have been taken by first class post.

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