



8.26.26

To Whom IT May Concern

From: San Joaquin County Public Health Laboratory (SJCPHL) HK

SUBJECT: **Handling and Transport of Cerebrospinal Fluid (CSF) Specimens, Blood Specimens, and Bone Marrow Specimens for Acid-Fast Bacilli (AFB) Culture**

Tuberculosis meningitis is frequently characterized by paucibacillary specimen, meaning that very few organisms may be present. Delays in specimen processing or inappropriate storage conditions may further reduce culture sensitivity and negatively impact the recovery of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. Because CSF (or blood or Bone marrow) is normally sterile specimen and often contains low numbers of organisms, maintaining specimen integrity and viability is critical for successful culture recovery.

Unlike many other specimen types submitted for mycobacterium culture, **CSF or blood or bone marrow** specimens are considered an **exception to routine refrigeration practices**. National tuberculosis laboratory guidance recommends that these critical specimens must be transported to the laboratory as soon as possible **at room temperature and not refrigerated**.

Please refer to the San Joaquin County PHL Specimen Collection Quick Guide:
<https://sjcphs.org/docs/default-source/phs-documents2/phs-lab/specimen-collection-quick-guide-07-2026.pdf>

Feel free to contact the laboratory @ 209-468-3460 or phslabmgrs@sjcphs.org in case you have any questions.



209-468-3460



209-468-0639



1601 E. Hazelton Ave., Stockton, CA 95205



PHSLabLeadership@sjcphs.org