

# Pathology Submission Guidelines

## Choosing the correct number of sites for cytology and biopsy submissions

Fees are determined by the number of sites, lesions/masses, or organs submitted. Use the appropriate test code based on number of sites. Submit up to two slides per site for cytology samples.

Cytology test codes			Biopsy test codes		
Priority (1–2 working days)	Standard (3–5 working days)	Fluid analysis (1–2 working days)	Priority (2–3 days)	Standard (3–5 days)	Complex (5–14 days)
605 (1 site)	2801 (1 site)	905 (body cavity effusions)	601 (1 site)	2701 (1 site)	7217
647 (2 sites)	2802 (2 sites)	906 (synovial fluid)	6012 (2 sites)	2702 (2 sites)	
648 (3 sites)	2803 (3 sites)	900 (CSF)	6013 (3 sites)	2703 (3 sites)	

Test codes for additional sites are available at [vetconnectplus.com](http://vetconnectplus.com).

- Provide patient signalment (including breed), relevant history, clinical signs, physical examination findings, therapies instituted, and the anatomic site sampled.
- Include the following information, where applicable:
  - Gross lesion description, including size, shape, consistency, symmetry, and border definition (well-demarcated vs. invasive)
  - Radiographic findings (especially for bony lesions or oral masses) and/or ultrasonographic findings (especially for samples from internal organs)
  - References to prior laboratory results (prior cytology/biopsy, recent complete blood count), including accession numbers
  - Any specific questions you would like answered
  - Working clinical diagnosis

To learn more, view *Getting the Most Out of Your Cytology Pathology Submissions* and *Getting the Most Out of Your Biopsy Pathology Submissions* at the IDEXX Learning Center.

## Cytology samples

- Needle aspirates and fluids from the same lesion are charged as 1 site.
- Multiple lymph node aspirates are considered 1 site; however, if samples from lymph node(s) and a mass are submitted together, they are charged as 2 sites.

- Fluids from separate body cavities (abdomen, thorax, pericardium) or multiple joints are charged as separate sites. Cytologic evaluation of the fluid performed by a pathologist is included in the fluid analysis test code, so a separate cytology code is not needed for body cavity effusions, synovial fluid, or cerebrospinal fluid samples.
- Body cavity fluid sample and aspirates from a separate mass lesion, submitted together, are considered separate sites and should be submitted under the combined test code 9057 (example: abdominal effusion plus aspirates from a gastrointestinal mass is a 2-site submission under code 9057).
- A fluid component obtained from a mass lesion (such as a subcutaneous cyst or fluid-filled mass) is considered a cytology sample and should be submitted under a cytology code (605, 2801, etc.), not a fluid analysis code.
- Bone marrow cytology can be submitted using test code 607; if a core biopsy is obtained along with the cytology sample, the combined test code for both cytology and histopathology is 6070.

## Cytology submission guidelines

- Make slides using either a *squash* technique or a blood-smear technique. **Note:** Nondiagnostic samples often result when material is expelled on slides but not smeared, when excessive pressure is applied upon smearing, or when material is too thick or dense. Stain 1 representative slide to ensure adequate cellularity and quality.
- Using pencil, label the slide(s) with the source and the patient name and place into slide containers. If multiple sites are submitted, label both the slides and the slide boxes for each site. When submitting both needle aspirates and impression smears from the same lesion, mark the collection method on the label of each slide.
  - For fluid samples, include prepared slides from the fluid as well as an IDEXX-provided EDTA tube containing the fluid; do not submit fluid in a serum separator tube, serum red-top tube with clot activator, or in a syringe.
  - Both prestained and unstained slides can be included for cytology evaluation; unstained slides should be air-dried and not fixed or heated.
- Label each submitted slide holder and/or tube with the patient's first and last name, collection date, specimen ID, and veterinarian's name.
- Store slides at room temperature and do not package them with formalin-fixed biopsy samples or cold packs.

## Biopsy samples

- Margins are evaluated and measured grossly and microscopically for all mass lesions, as applicable, free of charge.
- Multiple mass lesions are charged as separate sites; multiple needle biopsies, punch biopsies, or incisional samples from the same site are charged as 1 site.
- For evaluation of organs (with or without bone) or large and complex biopsies (e.g., spleen, liver, and lung lobe; complex mammary chain; bone biopsies [amputated digits or limbs; amputated jaw]), submit under code **7217 (Complex Biopsy)**. **Note:** For more detailed submission information, visit [idexx.com/7217](https://www.idexx.com/7217).
- For endoscopic biopsies, you can submit multiple gastrointestinal sites under code **601017 (Biopsy, Priority with Microscopic Description—Comprehensive Gastrointestinal Tract)**, or you can submit from anatomically distinct and labeled regions (stomach, jejunum, ileum), which are considered separate sites (3 sites).

If multiple specimens are in an anatomically similar location (such as multiple areas of small intestine) and are included in the same jar, they will be charged as a single site and reviewed and interpreted as a whole. If related specimens are submitted in separate jars, they will be charged separately and reviewed independently.
- Samples from generalized skin conditions (e.g., punch biopsies, ellipses, etc.) are charged as follows:
  - Up to 5 samples from affected skin region(s) = 1 site.
  - 6–10 samples = 2 sites.
- Reproductive tract samples are charged as follows:
  - Uterus and ovaries submitted en bloc = 3 sites.
  - Uterus only = 1 site.
  - One ovary = 1 site; both ovaries = 2 sites.
  - Each testicle is charged as a separate site; if a separate skin lesion is on the scrotum, this is a third site.
- Individually labeled lymph nodes and masses are charged as separate sites.
- Each separately labeled liver lobe is charged as a separate site, as liver can contain multiple independent conditions that may influence overall patient management. If more than 1 mass is present in a single liver lobe, each additional mass represents an additional site; multiple laparoscopic or needle biopsies of liver included together, and not separated as to site, are considered 1 site.
- Tissues obtained during necropsy may be ordered using code **69000 (Necropsy, Multiple Tissue Specimens)**. **Note:** IDEXX Reference Laboratories does not perform whole-body necropsy.

## Biopsy submission guidelines

- Place specimen(s) in the appropriate-sized IDEXX-provided formalin container(s).
  - Do not reuse containers or use containers not approved for formalin.
  - Use separate, individually labeled jars for each site in a multiple-site submission.
  - Please make sure you use a compliant biopsy container that holds enough to completely cover the entire mass/lesion. Use a 10:1 formalin concentration to allow for adequate fixation.
- Label each container with the patient's first and last name, collection date, specimen ID, and veterinarian's name. If the specimen is very small, place in a microcassette before putting it in a formalin container (microcassettes are available through IDEXX Reference Laboratories).
- To ensure all specimens for the same patient are processed together, package all jars with the requisition form into one bag. If there is not enough room to fit all jars into a single bag, use a larger resealable bag that will keep all sites submitted for the patient together, or wrap an elastic band around multiple bags for the same patient.
- Large tissue specimen shipping instructions:
  - Samples that are too large to fit in IDEXX-provided formalin jars should be shipped fresh, wrapped in gauze wetted with saline (not soaked), and placed in IDEXX-provided **Large Biopsy Submission Kits**.
  - Alternatively, you can triple-bag the specimen, using 1- to 5-gallon freezer bags or 10-gallon red biohazard bags. Place absorbents and ice packs inside the middle layer bag.
  - For fresh tissue sample submissions, store specimens in a refrigerator (not freezer) until ready for pickup. **Note:** Larger specimens require additional time for fixation; the normal turnaround time may not apply.
- Submit samples using your standard FedEx\*, UPS\*, or courier service process.

Pathology submission supplies may be ordered through [IDEXX Online Orders](#).