

Blood Culture (Canine & Feline)

Indications

- Blood cultures are indicated for animals suspected of having bacteraemia (e.g., bacterial endocarditis or pyrexia of unknown origin).

Notes

- Only use blood culture bottles that are within date.
- Each bottle can be inoculated with up to 10 ml of blood.
- Consider the volumes below depending on the size of the patient:
 - < 2 kg: 3 ml of blood
 - 2 – 10 kg: 3-5 ml of blood
 - > 10 kg: 10 ml of blood
- Blood samples must be collected before starting antimicrobial therapy and may be more diagnostic if collected during an episode of pyrexia.
- Three different blood samples, over 24 hours, are usually recommended, as bacteraemia can be intermittent. For critically ill patients suspected of septicemia, three blood samples over 30 minutes (3 samples, 10 mins apart) may be taken before starting antimicrobial therapy. Exercise care in anaemic patients undergoing repeated venepuncture.
- If more than one blood sample is collected for culture, they should be inoculated into separate blood culture bottles.

Protocol

- Clip and prepare the venepuncture site aseptically to prevent bacterial contamination.
- Wear sterile gloves during venepuncture.
- Collect 3-10ml of blood using a sterile syringe and needle (see notes above for suggested volumes).
- Disinfect the diaphragm of the blood culture bottle with alcohol and allow it to dry.
- Use a new sterile needle to transfer the blood to the culture bottle and mix well by gently inverting it.
- Label the bottle(s) with the patient's details and date of collection.
- Store the bottle at room temperature and dispatch it to the reference laboratory promptly.

