

Instructions for self-collected vaginal swabs

- Routine examination of high vaginal swabs (HVS) includes microscopy for bacterial vaginosis (BV) and Trichomonas vaginalis (TV) and culture for Candida, Lancefield Groups A, C and G streptococci and Staphylococcus aureus.
- Self collected swabs are not suitable for diagnosis of gonococcal infection, in this instance an endocervical swab is required.
- Please read all instructions before collecting samples. If you have any questions about this process, please ask your doctor or nurse.

Preparing for sample collection

- Wash hands with soap and water prior to collection
- Undress to expose the vaginal area.
- Put yourself in a comfortable position.
- Remove the swab container from the packaging.

Collecting the sample

1. Twist the white cap to break the seal on tube (Figure 1). Pull accompanying black-capped swab out of package. Do not touch swab tip or lay swab down.
2. Hold cap attached to swab with one hand so it is pointing towards you (Figure 2).
3. With other hand, gently spread the skin outside the vagina. Insert tip into vaginal opening (Figure 2).
4. Angle tip towards lower back and relax.
5. Slide swab no more than 2 inches/ 5 centimetres in to vagina (Figure 3). To help swab slide in easily, gently rotate the swab as you push. If this is difficult , do not attempt to continue.
6. Rotate swab for 10-15 seconds. Make sure swab touches the walls of the vagina so that moisture is absorbed into the swab. (Figure 4).
7. Withdraw the swab without touching the surrounding skin. Remove white cap from tube and place swab in tube. Push to securely close tube with black cap on the end of the swab. (Figure 5).
8. Repeat if second swab is being collected.

After collection

- Wash hands with soap and water, rinse, and dry.
- Ensure tube label is completed with your details Return tube(s) with swab(s) inside as instructed.
- Store and transport at room temperature.

