Instructions for collection and transport of specimens for food poisoning

Samples for food poisoning

1. Nasal and Hand swab for food handler
2. Rectal swab and vomitus from patients
3. Remnant of cooked food
4. Water sample

(1) Collection and transport of Nasal and Hand swab

- **Use sterile cotton swab**
- **Introduce one inch into nose, gently rotate against the nasal mucosa of both sides**
- **After washing hands with soap and water (not antiseptic), rub with swab stick**
- **Place it in a transport media (Stuart or Amies)**
- **Label and send to lab as soon as possible**

Remark: Only one swab must be used for collection of 10 fingers.
Only one swab must be used for collection of both nostrils.

(2) Collection and transport of Rectal swab

- Swab introduce at least 2 inches deep within the rectum
- After withdrawing of swab from rectum, check faecal stain
- Swab is put into transport media (Normal saline can be used)

Collection and transport of vomitus

- Vomitus must be collected in sterile container

(3) Collection and transport of remnant of cooked food

- **Remnant of food must be collected in sterile (clean) plastic bag separately**
- **Proper labeling**
- **Send with cold chain**

Remark: Raw materials used (before cooking) must be sent to FDA

1. **Water sample**

Water sources can be divided into three basic types

(a) Water from a tap or fixed hand pump

(b) Water from a reservoir (lake, tank, river)

(c) Water from a dug well

Sampling from a tap or pump outlet

- Remove any attachments from tap that may cause splashing.
- Wipe off the dirt from outside the tap.
- Turn on the tap at maximum flow and let the water flow for 1-2 minutes.
- Sterilize it for a minute with a flame using a gas lighter or ignited cotton wool soaked in spirit.
- Turn on the tap and allow the water to flow at medium flow for 1-2 minutes.
- Open the sterile container for collecting the sample and fill by holding the bottle under the water jet. Leave a small airspace to facilitate shaking at the time of inoculation prior to analysis.
- Stopper the cap and label the specimen

Sampling from a reservoir

- **Open the bottle under sterile conditions.**
- **Fill it by holding the bottle by the lower part, submerging it to a depth of about 20 cm., with mouth facing upwards. If there is a current, the bottle should face the current.**
- **Stopper the bottle and label it.**

Sampling from a dug well

- Attach a stone to the sampling bottle with a piece of string.
- Tie a 20 meter length of clean string on the bottle and to a stick.
- Open the bottle as described above and lower into the well.
- Immerse the bottle completely in water without touching the sides of the well and lower it down to the bottom of the well.
- Pull it out when the bottle is filled.
- Discard a little water to provide airspace.
- Stopper and label the bottle.

The water sample should be transported to the laboratory as soon as possible, preferably within one hour. If it takes more than three hours, it should be transported in ice box and should be processed within 24 hours of collection. While sampling chlorinated water 0.5 ml of sodium thiosulphate solution (18 gm/L) should be added to the sampling bottles to neutralize the residual chlorine present in water.