

PRODUCT UPDATE

Clinical Center Standardization Committee



January 2003 (3)

PRODUCT REVIEW

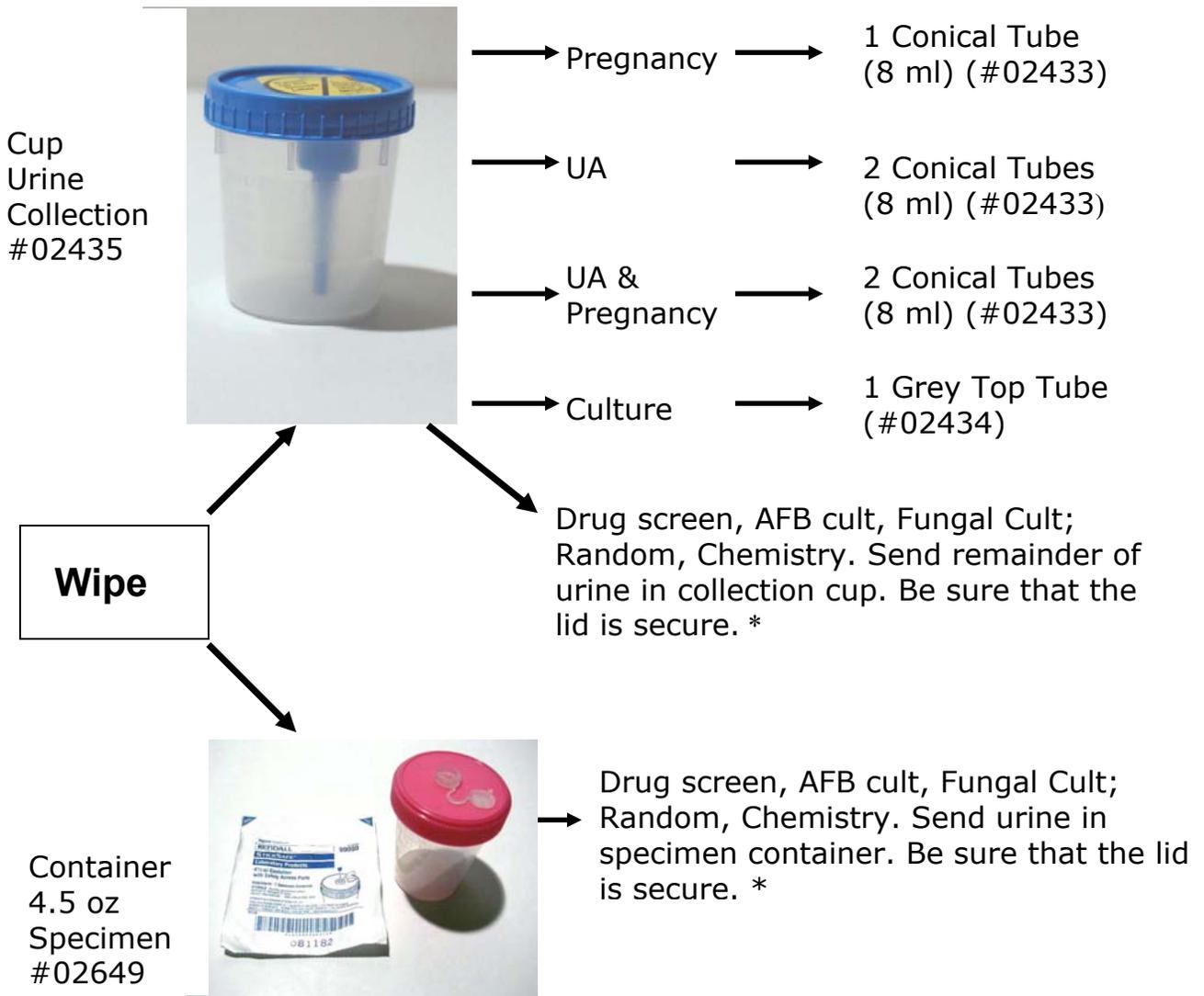
CONTAINER 4.5 OZ SPECIMEN (#02649)

AND

CUP URINE COLLECTION (#02435)

FOR

SMALL VOLUME URINE SPECIMENS



*** There have been a few ORS reports about #02435 and #02649 leaking. Investigation indicates that this is not a design problem. Sometimes a container can seem secure when it is cross-threaded or a little loose. Before placing #02435 or #02649 into a specimen transport bag, double-check to be sure that the lid is secure.**

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“DID YOU KNOW?”

Jessie Horton, RN, 12E/TU, asked for information about the collection of urine specimens for Legionella or culture specimens.

“The vacutainer container we use for urine culture collection does not come in a sterile package, nor is it labeled "sterile". This has caused some of the nursing staff to question whether or not the contents of the container would be appropriate to use for Legionella or culture.”

We consulted with DLM. Dr. Patrick Murray, Chief, Microbiology Service, DLM. Dr. Murray provided the following educational response:



“Although urine is theoretically a sterile fluid, it is recognized that it can be transiently colonized by bacteria migrating from the urethra into the bladder. These organisms are normally removed rapidly by the flushing action of voiding urine, and the bactericidal properties of the cells lining the bladder wall.

Additionally, small numbers of bacteria are commonly introduced into the urine when the specimen is collected by voiding or catheterization. For these reasons, the urine does not have to be collected in a sterile container—if there is not a delay in transporting the specimen from the patient to the lab. Occasionally, these tubes can be contaminated with a gram-negative organism but this is exceedingly rare, and would be detected by isolating the same organism from multiple specimens. Therefore, the use of the vacutainer tube is convenient and perfectly acceptable for culture of the specimen. From the second part of the question, there is a bit of confusion about Legionella. Urine is not cultured for Legionella. Rather, an immunoassay is performed for the detection of a legionella antigen that is excreted in the urine. For this application, the urine does not need to be sterile. I should also mention that whenever urine is submitted for Legionella, a culture must always be performed. The reason for this is the urine test detects an antigen that is found in only one strain of Legionella. Although this is the most common strain, it is not the only one that causes disease.