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1. About us

The Synovial fluid cytology service of Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (CMFT) is located at the Manchester Cytology Centre, 1st floor of Clinical Sciences building 2. It is the largest unit of its kind in the country providing cervical screening using the SurePath Liquid Based Cytology System and a wide variety of non-gynaecological cytology services. Please see the Cervical Cytology User Manual for more information on cervical cytology services.

The non gynaecological cytology service provides a comprehensive specialist service, reporting on a wide range of samples including serous fluids, urine, cerebrospinal fluid, bronchoscopically obtained respiratory samples and fine needle aspirates (FNAs). We provide a diagnostic service to CMFT, Trafford General Hospital, the Christie Hospital and general practices. For more information please see the non gynaecological cytology User Manual.

The osteoarticular pathology service by synovial fluid analysis began in April 2011. Synovial fluid analysis is of greatest value in distinguishing inflammatory from non-inflammatory arthropathies and in defining specific disorders within these two groups. It is also important in the diagnosis of early inflammatory disease where it might be possible on the basis of cytology to identify a specific arthropathy before the clinical syndrome develops. In these cases accurate early diagnosis often allows the institution of specific therapy before irreversible joint damage has occurred. Finally, it permits the very rapid diagnosis of joint disease, particularly in disorders such as septic arthritis, where the prognosis is inversely related to delay in diagnosis.

The department is fully CPA accredited and an approved IBMS training centre. We are closely associated with the North of England Pathology and Screening Education Centre (NEPSEC) and provide training to medics and scientific staff. We are fully committed to maintaining this accreditation by an established quality management system and standards determined by the Royal College of Pathologists together with scheduled clinical and quality audits and national guidelines. We are working towards full ISO 15189:2012 accreditation and adhere to the Data Protection Act 1998.

Reports generated by the Department of Cellular Pathology are, in the main, qualitative rather than quantitative. Uncertainty of Measurement is considered and controlled throughout the sample pathway by employment of a robust quality management system and continued accreditation to national standards. Where direct clinical impact measurements are made, assessments of uncertainty of measurement are made and are available on request.
1.1 Opening hours
The department is open from 08:00hrs – 17:00 hrs, Monday to Friday (except bank holidays). Synovial fluid samples should be received in the department by 16:00 hrs.

1.2 Services available at CMFT

- Non-gynaecological cytology
  1. Synovial fluid cytology
  2. Biomedical Scientist (BMS) assistance at radiological and ad hoc FNA clinics
  3. BMS assistance and on site specimen adequacy assessment at dedicated Head and Neck clinics, including thyroid.
  4. On site consultant led provisional diagnoses/adequacy assessment of endobronchial ultrasound (EBUS) FNA samples
  5. Exfoliative cytology
- Gynaecological Cytology

1.3 Services available at TGH

- Non-gynaecological cytology
  1. Exfoliative cytology
  2. FNA without BMS on-site assistance
  3. BMS assistance and on site specimen adequacy assessment at dedicated Head and Neck clinics, including thyroid

1.4 Services provided to the Christie Hospital

- Non-gynaecological cytology
  1. Exfoliative cytology
  2. FNA cytology, including BMS assistance in slide preparation and on site specimen adequacy assessment.
2. Find or contact us at CMFT

The Manchester Cytology Centre is located on the first floor of Clinical Sciences Building 2. All visitors should access the department via the reception area of Clinical Sciences Building 1.

Please contact our department if you have any complaints or service improvement suggestions. Alternatively complaints can be made through the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 0161 276 8686 or pals@cmft.nhs.uk.

Manchester Cytology Centre  
1st Floor Clinical Science Building 2  
Manchester Royal Infirmary  
Oxford Road  
Manchester  
M13 9WL

Email: cyto.pathology@cmft.nhs.uk

Telephone Enquiries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
<th>Fax</th>
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<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>0161 276 5116/8817</td>
<td>0161 276 5113</td>
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<td>Synovial fluid cytology results</td>
<td>0161 276 5115/5116/6727</td>
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<td>Advice on Synovial fluid sample collection. Comments, complaints or suggestions.</td>
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<td>Request sample containers or forms</td>
<td>0161 276 8817</td>
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2.1 Key Contacts at CMFT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
<th>E-mail</th>
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<tbody>
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3.0 Specimen acceptance policy

Each specimen must be accompanied by a completed and matching sample request form. Please ensure all fields of the request form are complete. See page 10 for instructions on completing the synovial fluid cytology request form. A blank copy of same is available for download on page 11. Alternatively we can supply forms on request.

All specimen containers must be clearly labelled with:

1. Patient’s full name
2. Date of Birth
3. NHS &/or Hospital number
4. Aspiration site
4.0 Package and transport of samples

Samples taken at central site must be sent with the porter and not via the pneumatic tube.

Synovial fluid samples requiring transport on the public road must be packaged and transported in compliance with “The Carriage of Dangerous Goods and Use of Transportable Pressure Equipment Regulations (ADR Regulations) 2011”. Specimens must be packaged according to P650 instructions with a UN3373 diamond point label - Biological Substance, Category B.

Please note instructions P650 requires three layers of packaging:

- Primary container (e.g. universal tube, vial)
- Secondary container (e.g. specimen bag)
- Outer packaging (e.g. rigid transport box).

The primary sample must be individually bagged in a secondary bag and sealed. If the sample is liquid, enough absorbent material must be added to the secondary bag to absorb a potential spillage of the sample. The request form must be placed in the specimen bag’s separate pouch.

Specimens must then be placed in a rigid box and closed. The box must comply with Transport Regulations. The outside must be clearly labelled Biological Substance Category B, with a UN3373 diamond label. The laboratory address should be clearly written.

If a sample is sent by post, please note that Royal Mail will only carry UN3373 Diagnostic Specimens if they are packed following Packaging Instruction P650 and:

- Are sent by first class post or Special Delivery and to inland addresses only
- The packet is marked with the sender’s name, telephone number and address.

Specimens must be delivered to the laboratory within 24 hours. If there is unavoidable delay in sending the specimen, please keep it refrigerated at 4°C.

If possible send specimens on the first 4 working days of the week as the laboratory is not open at weekends.

If sepsis is suspected and the laboratory receives a telephone call in advance then an urgent specimen will be processed if it arrives before 16:00hrs. Other urgent samples must arrive before 13:30hrs to be processed on the same day.
5.0 Turn around Time

The Synovial fluid cytology service is mandated by the guidelines of the Royal College of Pathologists (RCPath) on turn around times, that is, 80% of cases to be reported within seven calendar days and 90% of all cases to be reported within ten calendar days (http://www.rcpath.org/Resources/RCPath/Migrated%20Resources/Documents/K/RCPathKPI%20proposals_Jul13.pdf).

However, sometimes a sample may be deemed urgent by the requesting clinician in these instances;

- **Urgent specimens** will be processed on the same day if received by 13:30 hrs. Please provide a contact number or bleep and name.

- **Urgent specimens received by 16:00 hrs** will be processed the same day if the clinician telephones the laboratory beforehand.

- We will aim to give a same day report, this may only be a provisional report pending further ancillary tests.

- **It is recommended that the requesting clinician discuss such specimens with the cytopathologist between 08:00 and 16:00 hrs on 0161 276 5115/5116. In all cases, the clinician should telephone the laboratory in advance and provide a contact name and phone or bleep number.**

Routine specimens will be processed on the same day provided that the sample is received by 11:00 hrs. This may vary depending on clinical information or if ancillary tests are required e.g special stains.

- Synovial fluid cytology reports are printed and sent out daily, addressed to the consultant or GP who requested the test.

- Reports of any Sepsis are telephoned.

- To discuss the cytology report with the Consultant Cytopathologist, contact the department between 08:00 hrs and 17:00 hrs on 0161 276 5115/5116
6.0 Current practice

We provide a comprehensive Synovial fluid analysis through which inflammatory arthropathies can be distinguished from non-inflammatory arthropathies and in defining specific disorders within these two groups.

Synovial fluid analysis is also important in the diagnosis of early inflammatory disease where it might be possible to identify a specific arthropathy before the clinical syndrome develops.

Finally, it permits the very rapid diagnosis of joint disease, particularly in disorders such as septic arthritis.

Synovial fluid analysis consists of the following:

- White blood cell count
- Presence of Rhagocytes
- Crystal identification
- Particle identification
- Differential white blood cell count
- Gram staining for the presence of Gram +ve/-ve bacteria.

6.1 Limitations

At least 300µl of sample is required for full analysis. Volumes less than this will have limited analysis.

It is important to send the samples to the department as soon as possible, samples over 2 days old start to degenerate making analysis difficult and increasing the likelihood of an inadequate report being issued.
7.0 Synovial Fluid sample collection

Please see specimen acceptance policy on page 6

Paediatric Lithium Heparin bottle and Synovial request forms are provided by the laboratory for sample collection upon request. Please contact us on telephone numbers 0161 276 5115/5116/6727 for Lithium Heprain bottles and/or request forms.

For full analysis, at least 300 µl of Synovial fluid is required

**Step 1:** Collect sample from site and expel all into a Paediatric Lithium Heparin bottle.

**Step 2:** Mix thoroughly by gentle inversions

**Step 3:** Label container according to specimen acceptance policy (page 6)
8.0 Completion of the Synovial fluid cytology request

To prevent delay to processing/issuing of reports, please ensure all field of the form are filled in.
Supply the name and address of your hospital/surgery

Insert the name of the consultant who requested the sample and the department the report is to be sent to

Insert the patients details here ensuring that these match the details given on the specimen tube. Label specimen with patient name, DOB, NHS number and site of aspiration

Insert appropriate clinical history here

Indicate if high risk

Indicate the specimen type. If the sample is from a prosthetic joint specify the type

Indicate the site of the specimen and the side of the body

Indicate the date and time the aspirate was taken

To be filled in by the aspirating clinician ensuring contact number/bleep is given

N.B. Incomplete forms will result in reporting delay

Visit us via www.cmft.nhs.uk
8.1 Download a Synovial fluid cytology request form