

**Vetpath** is a specialist veterinary laboratory dedicated to providing our clients with the finest laboratory diagnostic service. A team of veterinary pathologists and medical scientists with extensive experience in veterinary diagnostic pathology forms the core of the Vetpath team.

# VN News

**AUGUST 2010**

## WORKPLACE HYGIENE MONITORING

Veterinary practices are a challenging environment from a hygiene perspective. While we strive to keep the environment clean and pathogen free, there are constant challenges to this process. The build-up of potentially pathogenic bacteria, yeasts and moulds could be a significant risk to both healthy and unwell patients alike.

Despite all the best intentions, can you satisfy yourself that the environment is as clean as you would like? Are your cleaning protocols appropriate and the cleaning products actually effective?

Vetpath are now providing a programme to help ensure your practice environment can be monitored for cleanliness and sterility.

Vetpath will provide monitoring of surface microbial load in low-risk, semi-clean and very clean areas as

well as evaluation of autoclave efficacy.

In this way practices can monitor trends in microbe counts to assist in developing and maintaining appropriate cleaning protocols and to ensure sterile equipment is indeed aseptic.

This is provided in a monthly pack. This takes the form of two distinct processes:

- Contact plates are provided for determining the microbial load on cleaned surfaces.
- Spore strips are used to determine effective sterilisation in the autoclave.

Each month plates and strips are sent out to practices and returned to Vetpath. The results are sent back to participating clinics and stored for comparison. Trends in microbial load can be readily checked and measures instituted to ensure appropriate cleaning is taking place.

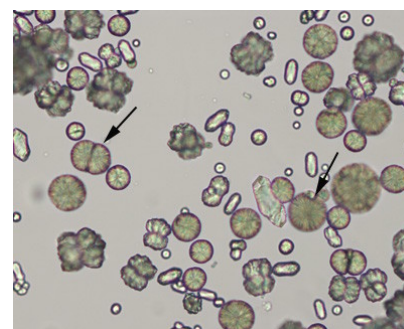
More complex environmental monitoring can be requested in the event of significant bacterial overload or in the event of a nosocomial infection outbreak. In these cases Vetpath staff can advise on the best methods available to monitor the infection control.

### Contact Plates

Vetpath suggest checking surfaces across a range of areas within the practice such as high traffic areas (eg. consulting tables and kennels), clean areas (eg. surgical preparation areas and treatment room tables) and very clean rooms such as the surgery theatre.

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### What crystal is this?



**Source:**

<http://diaglab.vet.cornell.edu/clinpath/modules/UA-SED/crystal1.htm>

The answer is over the page.....

Practices should also consider checking other sites of potential contamination such as tiles near dental stations for aerosol contamination, sinks, drying racks etc. Ten plates are sent out in each pack. Vetpath suggest 4 plates are used in standard sites including:

- Consulting room table.
- Kennel floor.
- Treatment room or pre-surgical table.
- Theatre table.

The remaining 6 plates can be used at your discretion.



We suggest you keep good records of the sites sampled and try and use about 8 routine sites with 2 random locations each cycle.

Contact plates are gently applied to a surface for 2-3 seconds and then lifted without smearing or rotating the plate. These are then covered and sealed with some tape and the location/site noted on the cover. These plates will be cultured at Vetpath and the number of microbial colonies enumerated and recorded.

### Spore strips

Spore strips will be sent out monthly to participating practices. These are placed into the autoclave with a routine sterilisation run and upon completion are sent back to Vetpath for incubation.

Results of the incubation are recorded and returned to the practice. All practices joining the scheme will be sent a Certificate of Participation and a Folder for storing the results for easy filing.

The cost of the Surface Hygiene monitoring is \$60 (plus GST) for a single month and \$600 (plus GST) for a full year.

### Vaccination status testing

Vaccination testing has become more popular for practices with clients wishing to check their pet's immunity before proceeding with annual vaccination. Vetpath has several different options for testing; with both in house and as send away tests available.

Vetpath performs a combined immunofluorescent antibody (IFA) test for canine patients (Parvovirus (CPV) and Canine Distemper Virus (CDV)) and feline patients (Calicivirus, Herpes virus and Panleukopaenia (Parvo) virus). The IFA test determines the level of specific anti-viral IgG in the serum. Studies have shown that the IFA method is comparable to the gold standard haemagglutination test for CPV and the virus neutralisation test for CDV. These gold standard tests can be performed by Biobest Laboratories in the UK. Biobest can also test antibody titres for Canine Adenovirus (CAV). For most cases, however, the IFA test is adequate for assessing vaccination status. Note that since the titres are not compared year to year, you can

change method at any time without compromising the assessment of vaccination status.

The cost of vaccination testing is summarised below (the prices are excluding GST):

CDV + CPV (VP): \$30  
Canine Adenovirus (UK): \$45  
CDV, CPV and CAV (UK): \$99  
Feline combined titre (VP): \$50

### The crystals are ....

Calcium carbonate.

Calcium carbonate crystals usually appear as large yellow-brown or colourless spheroids with radial striations (see the arrow in the picture). They can also appear as smaller structures with round, ovoid or dumbbell shapes (background of the picture).

Calcium carbonate crystals are common in the urine of normal horses, rabbits, guinea pigs and goats. They have not been observed in canine or feline urine.



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