

Sampling for Microbiological Analysis

Have the following materials on hand prior to collection of samples:

- Permanent felt marker for labelling samples.
- An extra bag to put garbage in as you sample, as some of the environmental sampling “kits” may have disposable forceps, inner bags etc. Depending on the type of a sampling device used, you may find it awkward looking for a garbage container.
- A carry bag you can put over your shoulder for all testing materials.
- Lab sample sheet / forms / notebook to record product information.
- Appropriate clothing: clean gloves, clean lab coat, steel-toe safety boots, hair net, hard hat etc.
- Cooler with ice packs.

Collection of Food Samples

1. Wash your hands before you start with the sample collection.
2. Collect all samples aseptically so as to not contaminate the sample
Wear clean gloves, clean lab coat, hair net.
3. Collect **FIVE** sample units **per lot** unless otherwise specified.
Select a systematic random sample from the lot.
4. Each sample unit should be at least **250 g** of intact, whole food sample in the form in which it will be sold or distributed.
5. Place each food sample unit into a separate sterile sealable bag or clean plastic bag.
6. Make sure that the top of the bag is adequately closed.
7. Label the outside of the bag with detailed information that will identify each sample unit, including:
 - a. **Collection date and time**
 - b. **Name of the facility and registration number**
 - c. **Lot size and number**
 - d. **Name of the product and type of food** (including specific product type, the way it is processed or specific ingredients similar products)
 - e. **Sample unit weight**
 - f. **Production date and CODE**
 - g. **Name of the person that collected the sample**
8. Use **NEW** sample bag for each sample unit.
9. Include the **sample sheet/ lab requisition form** in a separate plastic bag with the sample.
10. Make sure that **ALL** the fields on the lab requisition/sample sheet are filled-out and the adequate information is provided.
11. Place the food samples and sample sheets into a clean and sanitized cooler with ice packs.
12. Keep the samples at refrigeration temperatures (i.e. 0 to 4°C) and bring them or ship the cooler to the laboratory as soon as possible.

The temperature of refrigerated samples must not exceed 7°C upon its arrival at the laboratory. Samples must be analyzed within 24 h of sampling.

13. Do not freeze the samples unless laboratory has been consulted.

e.g. 5 sample units from one lot/same batch.



Unopened, original containers should be sampled, when possible. A sample unit will consist of more than one container when the lot consists of containers smaller than 250 g. e.g. three of ~100 g containers in each sample unit



Collection of Environmental Swab Samples

- All environmental samples should be collected from areas where ready-to-eat products are handled.
- Samples should be collected **THREE** hours or more into the operation.
- At least **10** samples should be collected:
 - **5 or more from Food-Contact Surfaces:**
 - Work table/surface, slicers, food racks, cutting utensils, shelves in contact with food, packaging machines in contact with food etc.
 - **5 or less from Non-Food-Contact Surfaces:**
 - Drains in finished product handling areas, hoses, light switches, walls close to food, side or legs of conveyor/table/sink/cart/rack/slicer/any other type of processing machine etc.

1. Wash your hands before you start with the sample collection.
2. Collect all samples aseptically so as to not contaminate the sample.

Wear clean gloves, clean lab coat, hair net.

3. Prior to sampling, label the outside of the sample bag with the appropriate information that will identify the area being swabbed:
 - a. **Collection date and time**
 - b. **Name of the facility and registration number**
 - c. **Sampling site** (i.e. drain, worktable, slicer, filler etc.)
And type of location (i.e. non-food contact or food contact surface)
 - d. **Name of the person that collected the sample**
4. Separate the sample bag from the sponge package.

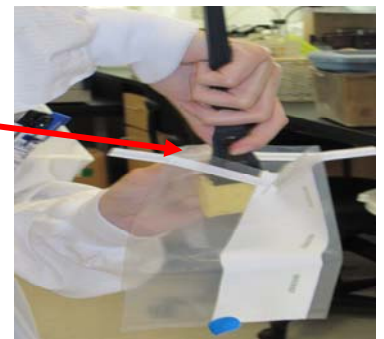


5. Hold the sample bag in the hand which you will not use for sampling. If both hands are required for sampling, place the sample bag into the pocket of the clean lab coat.
6. Open the sponge package.
7. Aseptically remove the sponge from the package holding onto the handle of the sterile forceps provided with the swab.
8. Rub sponge firmly and thoroughly over the surface to be sampled.
9. Size of the swabbing area should be 30 cm by 30 cm (e.g. size of a standard ruler) whenever possible.

For surfaces which are difficult to reach or swab in this manner due to their shape, rub the area as thoroughly as possible.



10. Remove the top layer of the sample bag and pull it open, aseptically, using the white straps located in the middle top part of the bag.
11. Transfer the sponge into the sample bag, carefully, so that it does not come into contact with the outside of the bag, and release the sponge from the forceps.
12. With minimal air trapped inside the bag, close it and roll the ends of the sample bag.
13. Place the bag containing the sample into a clean and sanitized cooler with clean and sanitized ice packs.
14. Use **NEW** sampling package kit for each sample.
15. Include the **sample sheet/ lab requisition** form in a separate plastic bag with the sample (if one form per sample is used).



If a multi-sample form is used, list all the samples onto one laboratory requisition form (make sure that the specific sample identifier on the bag is also recorded on the form, in order to identify each sample) and place it in a plastic bag and into the cooler with samples.

16. Keep the samples at refrigeration temperatures (i.e. 0 to 4°C) and bring them or ship the cooler to the laboratory as soon as possible.
 - Do not freeze the samples unless laboratory has been consulted.