

# SEPSIS

## BLOOD CULTURES



We often have cause to take blood cultures when working in the emergency department, but the results are more often acted on by the inpatient teams.

Unfortunately, false positive rates for blood cultures can be as high as 10%, potentially leading to incorrect or unnecessary antibiotic regimes.

We can make life easier for our patients and colleagues by minimising the number of false positives by adopting the correct technique.

Indications for blood culture collection:

- Pyrexia >38 degrees
- Fevers or rigors
- Focal signs of infection and systemically unwell
- SIRS syndrome with suspected infection
- New or worsening confusion
- Elevated inflammatory markers

### Collection Process

- Take blood cultures prior to giving antibiotics or prior to the next dose.
- Always take blood for blood cultures from a fresh venepuncture site.
- Clean your hands and put on gloves.
- Disinfect the culture bottle top with an alcohol wipe - allow it to dry.
- Clean the patient's skin with an alcohol wipe and allow it to dry.
- Once disinfected do not touch the venepuncture site again.
- Take 20ml of blood in a syringe.
- Use the same needle as used for sample collection to put 10ml into each bottle.
- Put blood into the anaerobic bottle first - this is the red bottle.
- Discard the needle into a sharps box and wash your hands.
- Write date and time of collection in the notes. Do not remove the bar code sticker from the blood culture bottle.