

Koala Health Hub

Chlamydia swab collection protocol

SWAB COLLECTION

Use dry, sterile, small (approx 2mm diameter tip "urethral" swabs), aluminium shafted, Rayon tipped swabs (e.g. Copan 160C from Interpath Services) http://www.interpath.com.au/interpath_products.html). Do not use swabs with liquid or gel transport media as these contain substances that interfere with our test. As the *Chlamydia* live within cells, it is necessary to swab firmly to remove some cells with the swab.

Eyes- (conscious or anaesthetised) Lift the eyelid and place the swab under the eyelid. Move the swab firmly back and forth 5-10 times against the inner surface of the upper and lower eyelid. Avoid rubbing it on the eyeball. Use a different swab for each eye.



Photographs taken by A. Casteriano during a PM performed by C. Marschner at the University of Sydney

Urogenital sinus (females) - (conscious or anaesthetised) Locate the vaginal opening. Female koalas have one opening for their digestive and reproductive tracts (the common vestibule- sometimes called a cloaca). Inside this opening there are two passages - the reproductive tract

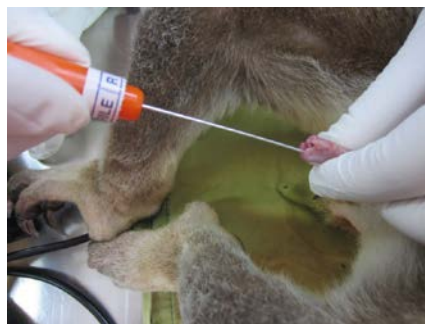
(urogenital sinus) is the one towards the front. Angle the swab towards the front of the animal as you gently insert it until it stops (typically a few cm). Press the swab firmly against the wall and rotate 5 – 10 times. Check the swab as you pull it out to make sure it has no faecal matter on it. If it does, you have probably accidentally swabbed the rectum and you should try again with a clean swab.



Photograph taken by A. Casteriano during a PM performed by C. Marschner at the University of Sydney

Penis (males) - (anaesthetised only). Extend the penis to its full length. Carefully insert the swab into the urinary passage until it stops (typically about 4-5 cm). Rotate the swab firmly 5-10 times.

Or- If the animal is not to be anaesthetised, a sample can be collected from discharge at the penile opening or from uncontaminated urine but this method will not be as good as the technique described above so it is important to note which technique was used.



Photograph taken by C. Marschner

Place the swab into the container and label with the koala's ID and the location the swab was collected from, any changes to the collection procedure, and the time and date of collection.

SAMPLE SUBMISSION

- Transport the swabs to Sydney University within 24 hours of collection **or** place in the fridge until they are ready to be transported. If storing for more than 3 days, freeze.
- We recommend using Express Post as they guarantee next business day delivery and offer a parcel tracking system.
- Package samples in accordance with Australia Post guidelines: <http://sydney.edu.au/vetscience/vpds/documents/Dangerous-prohibited-goods-packaging-post-guide.pdf>
- All samples to be submitted to the Koala Health Hub should be accompanied by a submission form (**All fields must be completed for free-of-charge samples to be processed**) and, in the case of new clients, a new client form as well. Both forms can be found following the link below:

http://sydney.edu.au/vetscience/wildlife_health/koalahealth.shtml

When sending samples, please notify Koala Health Hub Staff (02) 93512452

andrea.casteriano@sydney.edu.au so we know they are arriving and can get them into proper storage or processed ASAP. Chlamydial PCRs are performed on Thursdays and reported on Thursday afternoon or Friday. Cut off for submission is Wednesday afternoon close of business.