

Fetus/POCs/Missed ABs/Miscarriages

If it is at all possible that a specimen could be a POC (products of conception) it is vitally important to have the patient sign the “Disposition of Fetal Remains” consent form. Fetal parts do NOT have to be identified grossly in order for this form to be necessary. Specimens will not be processed until the signed form is received unless there are extenuating circumstances (e.g. suspected tubal pregnancy). Forms can be printed from the Client Services tab/Request and Consent Forms on the plpath website. POCs that are returned for burial are only returned to the facility of origin or to a funeral home if specifically requested (in-town only). If return is desired then send the specimen fresh on saline-moistened gauze. If the specimen is mistakenly put in formalin it will be drained off and rinsed before returning to the facility or funeral home. Physicians Laboratory **does not recommend** that specimens received in fixative be returned to the patient.

If fetal chromosome analysis is desired do NOT place the specimen in formalin; send it fresh wrapped in saline-moistened gauze. If transportation is going to be delayed place the specimen in the refrigerator or alternatively a piece may be removed and placed directly into basal transport media. Please see the Fetal Chromosome Analysis procedure under Client Services/Collection Instructions on the plpath website for further instructions.

Surgical Specimen and Autopsy Specimen Guidelines

A fetus that has a gestational age of less than 20 completed weeks is treated as a Products of Conception (surgical specimen). The fetus will be examined internally (cut into) unless it is noted on the requisition that no internal exam is desired. Submit the placenta along with the fetus, requisition, and “Consent for Disposition of Fetal Remains” form.

A fetus with a gestational age of 20 completed weeks or greater will be considered an autopsy and a request for examination must include permission for autopsy, either an “Autopsy Consent Form” if the autopsy is being requested by the parents, or a “Request for Autopsy” form if the autopsy is being requested by a physician. In this case, a “Consent for Disposition of Fetal Remains” form is not necessary as the disposition of the fetus will be handled by the appropriate funeral home. If chromosome analysis is desired but NOT an autopsy, place the appropriate tissue sample in basal transport media (see the Fetal Chromosome Analysis procedure for instructions) and send to Physicians Laboratory along with a surgical requisition form. The specimen will receive a gross only exam and be forwarded to the appropriate reference lab for testing.

