

# SPECIMEN COLLECTION INSTRUCTIONS

## Nipple Secretion Preparation

Although most breast discharges are benign and often the result of drainage of fibrocystic changes, smears of nipple secretions can occasionally be useful in the detection of intraductal carcinomas and breast cancers which involve lactiferous ducts. Sensitivity for detection of cancer with this technique however, is very low.

The following method involves expression of breast secretions without trauma and with minimal blood to obscure the specimen. It is not necessary to massage or squeeze the breast.

### Procedure

1. Label a glass slide with patient's full first and last name, second unique identifier, and specimen information in pencil. Include the word "AIR" to indicate the specimen is air-dried and not fixed. (Figure 1)
2. Gently express only the nipple and subareolar area of any secretions which may be in the collecting ducts. If no secretion appears at the nipple with this gentle compression, do not manipulate further.
3. Allow a drop of fluid to collect upon the tip of the nipple. Immobilize the breast and, using the nipple, smear the material across the glass slide.
4. Make up to three (3) smears from the expressed material (often the last smears are the best).
5. Either allow the slides to dry prior to putting them in slide holders for transport, or place them into 95% alcohol vials.



Figure 1