



## **PROTOCOL – BLOOD CULTURES**

Blood culture may be useful in an animal suspected of having bacteraemia or septicaemia, or where there are signs of sepsis (e.g. pyrexia, chills, lethargy, etc).

We can provide vented bottles containing 10ml (or 25ml on request) of brain heart infusion broth. These should be inoculated with 2mls of blood, collected into a sterile, plain syringe. The site for venepuncture should be prepared as for surgery, and the rubber cap in the bottle sterilised with an alcohol swab prior to inoculation. After addition of blood, the contents should be mixed gently to prevent clotting, and the bottle(s) submitted to the laboratory at the earliest opportunity. If there is any delay in submission, bottles should be maintained at room temperature (or 37°C if available). They should NOT be refrigerated or kept on top of radiators etc.

Examine the bottles prior to use and do not use if the broth shows any sign of turbidity; it should be crystal clear. Unused bottles have an expiration date of 12 months from date of supply when are stored at room temperature.

To maximise the diagnostic yield of blood cultures multiple sets of cultures may be ordered. These are ideally collected from different sites and at different times (usually 30 minutes apart).

Ordering multiple sets of cultures increases the probability of isolating a pathogenic organism in the blood, and reduces the probability of a positive culture due to contamination with skin bacteria.

Cultures are incubated for 7 days, sub-culturing several times within this period. Positive results are reported immediately, along with appropriate antimicrobial susceptibilities.