

STORAGE AND HANDLING OF MYCOPLASMA EXPERIENCE AGAR PLATES

PRODUCTS: All pre poured agar plates (MES, MEUS). All solid media products supplied as frozen supplement and agar for plate preparation at the customer's site (MS, US, AS, MB, MA, CB, CC, AlErt 24, MAMD, MOMD).

Media designed to support the growth of mycoplasmas and related mollicutes contain nutrients which also favour fungal growth. In addition some solid formulations, notably MS/MES have a low gel strength to enable isolation of certain fastidious species. Unlike liquid medium, solid media, once poured into petri dishes are no longer in a closed system, therefore care must be taken to minimise contamination from airborne fungal spores.

1. **Receipt of pre-poured plates**

Pre-poured plates are shipped in plastic grip-seal bags, agar side down (to prevent the gel dropping onto the lid in transit). On site, plates should be stored **INVERTED**. The bags are not suitable for long term (more than 1-2 days) storage at refrigeration temperatures, due to excessive condensation. Plates which are not used on receipt should be repacked **INVERTED** in a dry, closed, clean container before storage.

2. **Selection of petri dishes**

To avoid excess moisture during incubation, triple vented petri dishes should be used when preparing agar plates from agar and frozen supplement. Any medium dripped onto the agar lids during pouring must be cleaned off.

3. **Handling and storage of plates prepared from agar and frozen supplement**

Plates should be prepared and dried according to the instructions in "PREPARATION OF MYCOPLASMA EXPERIENCE BULK MEDIA". Plates which are not to be used immediately may be stored at refrigeration temperature (2-8°C.). Plates should be stored **INVERTED** in a closed, clean and dry container.

4. **Handling of agar plates**

Inocula should be allowed to dry before incubating plates inverted in the correct atmosphere. Plates should not be allowed to dry out as this will impact on growth promotion, but, when inspected for mycoplasma growth, they should also be checked for excessive moisture on the lids, which should be removed carefully with clean tissues before re-incubation.

5. **Decontamination**

Occasional moulds developing on the agar surface during incubation, either from the sample inoculum or the environment may be excised (non-swarming bacterial colonies may be ignored). Incubation or storage containers which have held plates where moulds have been observed should be disinfected, sterilised or discarded. Where contaminants are observed on stored plates, they should be discarded and the storage conditions reviewed.