

## **NC State Veterinary Cardiac Genetics Laboratory Cheek Swab Instructions**

### **Preparation Prior to Collection**

- Just prior to sampling, check the cat/dog's mouth to see that no food or other material is obviously present. If there is, clean/rinse the cat/dog's mouth to remove it.
- Never allow the sterile swab to touch anything except the inside of the cat/dog's mouth or the inside of the package that it came in. Especially never allow contact between swabs from different cats/dogs.
- Prepare a clean surface on which to place the opened swab package while you are swabbing the cat/dog.

### **Collection Instructions**

1. Use TWO swabs per cat/dog.
2. Label the swab packets with the cat or dog's call name, the owner's last name, permanent identification or registration number (if applicable) and collection date.
3. Label a standard paper (letter size) envelope with the same information as in #2.
4. Open the swab package at the handle end (NOT the collection tip end) and carefully peel the package away to within about an inch of the end. Remove the first swab. Do not touch the collection tip of the swab.
5. Do not allow the tip of the swab to touch anything other than the inside of the cat/dog's mouth and the inside of the packaging.
6. While holding the handle end of the swab, insert the tip along the inside of the cheek. Rotate the collection tip along the inside of the cheek for 20 seconds. Push the outside of the cat/dog's cheek while rotating the swab and firmly press the swab between the gum and cheek to enhance cell collection. The VCGL will accept ONE free re-submission of appropriate swab types that give an indeterminate result due to insufficient cell collection.
7. Hold the swab while it air dries for 10 seconds. Do NOT blow on the swab.
8. Reinsert the tip of the swab into the closed end of the package and remove the second swab. If your swabs came in plastic containers, put the swab directly into the labeled paper envelope you have prepared. DO NOT use the plastic container.
9. Repeat the above steps on the other cheek with the remaining swab (i.e. 2 swabs/dog).

10. Place the packaged swabs in the labeled paper envelope (NOT a plastic bag). Do NOT put the submission form in the envelope with the swabs.
11. Send the sample and completed submission form following the packaging instructions below.

### **Packing and Shipping**

A major concern in using cheek swabs is the possibility of microbial growth on the swab after the sample has been collected. This is particularly a problem during hot and humid times of the year. To reduce the chance for contamination, do not store the swabs (used or unused) in sealed plastic bags. Do not freeze them or store them in the refrigerator where condensation can more easily occur. Ice packs should NOT be used for shipping cheek swab samples. Be prepared to ship the cheek swab sample as soon as possible after it is collected.

By following the instructions you will have placed the air-dried swabs in a labeled, clean paper envelope. Do NOT put the submission form in the envelope with the swabs. Place this labeled envelope and the submission form (and payment by check or money order if applicable) into a sturdy mailing envelope. Write "Do Not Bend" on the outside. Send this package to:

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ATTN: Veterinary Genetics Laboratory  
Research Bldg. 228  
1060 William Moore Dr.  
Raleigh, NC 27607