

Blood Smear Preparation

Properly prepared blood smears are essential to accurately assess the patient's status.

1. Slides should be made within 2 hours, if possible. Prolonged exposure of the blood to the anticoagulant EDTA can cause abnormalities in the white cells.
2. Place a small drop of blood about one-half inch from the end of the glass slide.
3. Hold the slide with the drop of blood between your thumb and index finger.
4. Place the end of a second slide (spreader), held with the fingertips, at an angle of no greater than 30 degrees in front of the drop of blood.
5. Pull the spreader slide toward the drop of blood until they touch and allow the blood to spread evenly across the back of the spreader slide.
6. Push the spreader slide forward quickly with a steady even motion to produce a feathered edge. The blood smear should be one-half to two-thirds the length of the slide.
7. Allow the blood smear to air dry.
8. Label slide with patient's full name, date and identifying number on thick end of the blood smear i.e., opposite side of the feathered edge.
NOTE: Use a pencil or slide pen. Permanent pens are not to be used as the ink dissolves during the staining process.

