

30 June 2022

Re: Histology Pots with 10% Buffered Formalin

The majority of histology specimens are sent in a 70ml red lid histology pot containing formalin, which is critical to producing good preservation of the biopsies. However, this chemical gives off formaldehyde gas, presenting a potential health risk to those who are exposed to it as part of their work and precautions must be taken to eliminate or reduce exposure as much as possible.

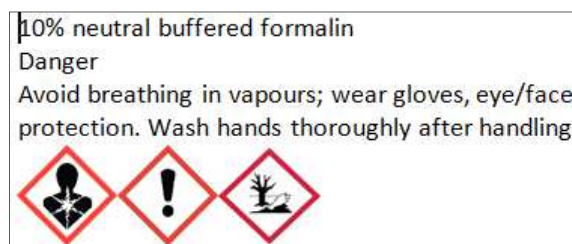
When a bag containing a leaking pot is opened, quite apart from the mess, the fumes are strong and very unpleasant for the staff. Staff must stop processing immediately and follow strict protocols to clean the surfaces of their work area, as well as drying the pot and often the request form.

To assist with safe handling of the pots, please remind all theatre teams to:

- use a pot size where the tissue sample can be entirely covered in formalin;
- ensure the lids on 70ml pots are correctly threaded and securely closed before placing into a biohazard bag;
- ensure the zip lock seal on the biohazard bag is fully closed;
- one biohazard bag can only hold a maximum of 6 x 70ml pots - if you are sending more than six pots, please use a second biohazard bag and staple the bags together;
- fold the paper request form and place in the side pocket to avoid contamination should the pot leak – do not place it in the bag with the pot(s).

For containers 400ml or larger:

- after adding formalin to a large container, a caution label must be placed on the side of the container, next to the patient label.



Note: caution labels will be sent out with all future orders of 400ml or larger containers. These can also be ordered by emailing: aps.info@adhb.govt.nz

- check the lids on large containers are secure, and then double bag the container if required.

We appreciate your cooperation.

Kind regards
Anatomic Pathology Service

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