

IDEXX Reference Laboratories

Submission requirements and guidance for complex biopsies



Changes to the IDEXX Complex Biopsy service

Beginning in January 2023, qualifying complex biopsy submissions not ordered under the Complex Biopsy test code will be automatically changed to the Complex Biopsy test code.

Note: All complex biopsy specimen types in the list below must be ordered with the Complex Biopsy test code.

Qualifying complex biopsy specimens:

- + Amputated limbs/digits/tails/jaws (whole or partial)
- + Bone (nonamputated specimen; not obtained by needle or core)
- + Brain (stand-alone; whole or partial)
- + Mammary chain (3 or more mammae), or at least 3 mass lesions
- + Eye
- + Gastrointestinal tract resection and anastomosis specimen
- + Heart (stand-alone; whole or partial)
- + Kidney (whole/nephrectomy)
- + Liver lobectomy with or without gallbladder; excludes wedge/punch/needles/incisional biopsies
- + Lung lobectomy
- + Spleen (whole spleen, partial specimen, or multiple incisional specimens)
- + Testes (one or both); submitted with or without scrotum
- + Uterus/ovaries (uterus only, one or both ovaries only, or en bloc)

This test code was created to support the evaluation of more complex biopsies that require:

- + Pathologic evaluation of multiple sites or lesions within a tissue or organ.
- + Complex trimming.
- + Additional processing by our experienced histology technicians.
- + Additional decalcification and/or fixation time.

Due to this additional processing (and time for decalcification and/or fixation), this test code has a longer turnaround time of 5–7 days. While results are typically provided within 5–7 days, some complex biopsy specimen types can take longer—up to 14 days depending on the level of complexity for specimen assessment, dissection, and processing (particularly for specimens involving bone).

Note: Specimens containing teeth require extended decalcification time (up to 21 days).

Special submission guidelines for specimens that are submitted for the Complex Biopsy test code.

Submission guidelines vary based on the specimen type:

Whole, complete, or partial organs (fresh or fixed), such as spleen, kidney, or heart

IMPORTANT: IDEXX anatomic pathologists recommend submission of these organs in their entirety under the Complex Biopsy test code, rather than subsampling. For example, submission of a whole spleen is considered



best medical practice and of higher diagnostic yield than submission of only portions or pieces of spleen.

Mammary chain and multiple mammary mass lesions

Mammary masses can be benign or malignant irrespective of size, and multiple masses are often seen histologically. Therefore, chains, or 3 or more mammary masses (as determined grossly or histologically), must be submitted using the Complex Biopsy test code.

Eye

- + Despite their relatively small size, trimming is complex and requires time and special care.
- + Retrimms are often needed.
- + Pathologist description and assessment is time consuming relative to other cases.

Jaw (mandible, maxilla) resections and/or amputations

Resected and/or amputated jaws (whole and partial) must be submitted with the Complex Biopsy test code if there are bone margins. This includes whole jaw and any partial jaw resection or amputation (with or without teeth), as these will require complex trimming for optimal margin evaluation.

Specimens from the oral cavity related to the jaw but DO NOT involve bone from the mandible or maxilla are excluded under our complex biopsy specimen definition. These specimen types may include:

- + Uncalcified or calcified gingival specimens when submitted without underlying attached jaw bone.
- + Teeth when submitted without surrounding attached jaw bone.
- + Tooth extraction from a soft tissue mass that does not include any underlying or surrounding attached jaw bone.

Amputated digits

- + Single or multiple amputated digits must be submitted with the Complex Biopsy test code. There is no additional cost if submitting more than one amputated digit.
- + Digit lesions very commonly involve bone. A study¹ in veterinary pathology literature looked at diagnoses made at digit amputation. The most common lesions reported

were lesions that often involve bone: epithelial inclusion cyst and keratoacanthoma for the benign category, and melanoma and squamous cell carcinoma for the malignant category. When appropriate, bone will be histologically evaluated in digit amputation submissions.

What specimens should NOT be submitted with the Complex Biopsy test code?

The following specimen types do not require complex processing, extended fixation and/or decalcification, and are not as time-consuming as complex biopsy specimens are for the reading pathologist to assess:

- + 1–2 mammary masses
- + Lumps/bumps/skin masses
- + Lymph nodes (submitted individually without a qualifying complex)
- + Skin lesions
- + Bone marrow biopsies (with or without bone marrow cytology)
- + Punch biopsies
- + Endoscopic biopsies
- + Needle or punch core bone biopsies < 5 mm thick
- + Tonsil (one or both)
- + Adrenal gland
- + Thyroid gland
- + Gallbladder
- + Pancreas
- + Anal glands

Reference

1. Wobeser BK, Kidney BA, Powers BE, et al. Diagnoses and clinical outcomes associated with surgically amputated canine digits submitted to multiple veterinary diagnostic laboratories. *Vet Pathol.* 2007;44(3):355–361. doi:10.1354/vp.44-3-355

To learn more about submitting biopsy specimens, including packaging and formalin shipping requirements, as well as guidance with submitting cytology specimens, visit [idexx.com/submitpathology](https://www.idexx.com/submitpathology) and [go.idexx.com/submitbiopsy](https://www.idexx.com/submitbiopsy).