



VIInfo

PROTECTING YOUR PATIENTS & PROTECTING YOUR STAFF

WORKPLACE HYGIENE MONITORING

Veterinary practices are a challenging environment from a hygiene perspective. While we strive to keep the environment clean and pathogen free, there are constant challenges to this process. The build-up of potentially pathogenic bacteria, yeasts and moulds could be a significant risk to both healthy and unwell patients alike.

Despite all the best intentions, can you satisfy yourself that the environment is as clean as you would like? Are your cleaning protocols appropriate and the cleaning products actually effective?

Vetpath are now providing a programme to help ensure your practice environment can be monitored for cleanliness and sterility.

Vetpath will provide monitoring of surface microbial load in low-risk, semi-clean and very clean areas as well as evaluation of autoclave efficacy.

In this way practices can monitor trends in microbe counts to assist in developing and maintaining

appropriate cleaning protocols and to ensure sterile equipment is indeed aseptic.

This is provided in a monthly pack. This takes the form of two distinct processes:

- Contact plates are provided for determining the microbial load on cleaned surfaces.
- Spore strips are used to determine effective sterilisation in the autoclave.

Each month plates and strips are sent out to practices and returned to Vetpath. Trends in microbial load can be readily checked and measures instituted

Vetpath Laboratory Services welcomes feedback on all aspects of our service from couriers to lab results. Please feel free to contact us at 9259 3666 or email enquiries@vetpath.com.au

to ensure appropriate cleaning is taking place. More complex environmental monitoring can be requested in the event of significant bacterial overload or in the event of a nosocomial infection outbreak. In these cases Vetpath staff can advise on the best methods available to monitor the infection control.

Contact Plates

Vetpath suggest checking surfaces across a range of areas within the practice such as high traffic areas (eg. consulting tables and kennels), clean areas (eg. surgical preparation areas and treatment room tables) and very clean rooms such as the surgery theatre. Practices should also consider checking other sites of potential contamination such as tiles near dental stations for aerosol contamination, sinks, drying racks etc.

Ten plates are sent out in each pack. Vetpath suggest 4 plates are used in standard sites including:

- Consult room table.
- Kennel floor.
- Treatment room or pre-surgical table.
- Theatre table.

The remaining 6 plates can be used at your discretion. We suggest you keep good records of the sites sampled and try and use about 8 routine sites with 2 random locations each cycle.

Contact plates are gently applied to a surface for 2-3 seconds and then lifted without smearing or rotating the plate. These are then covered and sealed with some tape and the location/site noted on the cover.

These plates will be cultured at Vetpath and the number of microbial colonies enumerated and recorded.

Spore strips

Spore strips will be sent out monthly to participating practices. These are placed into the autoclave with a routine sterilisation run and upon

completion are sent back to Vetpath for incubation. Results of the incubation are recorded and returned to the practice.

Practices can participate in the Surface Hygiene Monitoring Programme for a full year or for one month (i.e. on one occasion). The cost for a full year (12 packs of spore strips and culture plates) is \$600 plus GST. The cost for one month is \$60 plus GST.

All practices joining the scheme will be sent a Certificate of Participation and a Folder for storing the results for easy filing.