

BREAST PATHOLOGY GROSSING GUIDELINES

FORMALIN FIXATION

Due to CAP-recommended guidelines for ER and HER2/neu (including FISH) testing, specimens should be placed in formalin within one hour after the time of surgery or biopsy (collection time). Furthermore, the breast tissue should be in contact with formalin for at least 6 hours, not to exceed 72 hours.

Note: The exception to this is when the requisition states 'Rule out Lymphoma' or a prior core needle biopsy diagnosis was reported as lymphoma. In these cases, an assessment for a lymphoma work-up should be made (for potential flow cytometric studies or B5 fixation) before placing the breast tissue in 10% NBF.

Specimen collection time: The OR staff records the collection time of breast specimens in Beaker and contacts SurgPath personnel to pick up specimens in a timely fashion.

Ischemic time: Breast excisions/re-excisions/lumpectomies/partial mastectomies and all mastectomies (including prophylactic ones) are to be **immediately** (within 1 hour) weighed and placed in 10% neutral buffered formalin (NBF) once received or picked up from the OR. Ideally, this task will be performed by the personnel/technician prior to accessioning the case. The time the specimen was placed in 10% NBF will be written on the specimen container and documented in Case Notes in Beaker. The collection time and the time the specimen has been placed in 10% NBF will be used to calculate ischemic time:

(Time tissue placed in formalin [documented in case notes]) – (Collection time) = Ischemic Time

When a specimen comes in late on Friday: Gross the specimen such that you identify the tumor and submit sections of the tumor for the Friday 8-hour processor. If the specimen is still very fresh, then please submit the remaining sections (including lymph nodes) during the weekend such that they'll run on the Sunday processor.

As always, RECORD THE ISCHEMIC TIME AND THE FORMALIN FIXATION TIME

For long weekends/holiday schedule: All breast main specimens should be prioritized and grossed in before long weekends. Tissue should be submitted for the 8-hour processor for the same day, or the next available 8-hour process per the holiday schedule without going over 72 hours of total fixation.

Note that you may need to place tissue in alcohol if there is risk of over-fixation. You should review this with a PA and/or pathologist beforehand.

Calculating formalin fixation times

Monday – Friday	calculate fixation time until 12am
Sunday	calculate fixation time until 8pm on Sunday

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Specimen Type: MARGIN EXCISION/RE-EXCISION

Procedure:

- A. Oriented margin
 - 1. Measure
 - 2. Ink **new margin** **black** and **remaining surface** **blue**
 - 3. Section perpendicular to new margin and longest dimension
 - 4. Describe cut surface and any grossly identifiable masses
- B. Un-oriented margin
 - 1. If fragmented- aggregate weight, measurement- embed uninked
 - 2. If intact- measure
 - a. ink external surface black
 - b. section perpendicular to longest dimension
 - c. describe cut surface and grossly identifiable masses

Gross Template:

MMODAL COMMAND: "INSERT BREAST MARGIN"

It consists of an oriented portion of fibroadipose tissue with a [*suture/clip****] designating [*describe orientation****]. The specimen measures [*measure in three dimensions****] cm in greatest overall dimensions. Sectioning reveals [*yellow-tan cut surface/lesion****]. The specimen is entirely and sequentially submitted in cassettes [*describe cassette submission****].

INK KEY:

Black New margin
Blue Remaining surface

Cassette Submission: All tissue submitted. You can place up to 3 levels into one cassette. If additional margin is very large, consult with attending.