

The Retention and Use of Human Biologic Material

These guidelines were reviewed and approved by the CAP Executive, November 2005. The guidelines have been developed to encourage good practice and should be considered as minimum requirements. The guidelines are not intended to meet legislative requirements and laboratories should ensure that they comply with all municipal, provincial and federal regulations, including statutes of limitations.

SURGICAL PATHOLOGY	MINIMUM PERIODS OF RETENTION
Wet tissue	4 weeks after final report
Frozen tissue (e.g. renal biopsies)	Up to 20 years
Paraffin blocks	20 years
Slides	20 years
Surgical Consultation	Indefinitely
Paper Requisition	2 years
PEDIATRIC PATHOLOGY	
Wet tissue	4 weeks after final report
Paraffin blocks*	20 years
Slides	20 years
Surgical Consultation	Indefinitely
Paper Requisition	2 years
CYTOLOGY (gyne/non gyne)	
Slides (negative-unsatisfactory)	5 years
Slides (suspicious-positive)	20 years
Fine-needle aspiration slides	20 years
Cytology Consultation/Requisition	Indefinitely
Male fertility slides	1 year
Paper requisition	2 years
Cytology paraffin blocks	20 years
AUTOPSY RECORDS	
Wet tissue	3 months after final report
Paraffin blocks	10 years
Slides	10 years
Hospital Autopsy Records	Indefinitely
Coroner/Medical Examiner	as per general autopsy, or by Autopsy Records discretion of the Coroner's/Medical Office/forensic pathologist
EM Material	
Blocks, Slides/Grids/Photos (print/electronically digital image files)	20 years

* For special pediatric cases (i.e. Children's Hospitals) 50 years is the recommended minimum retention period for paraffin blocks.