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Standard Operating Procedures: Preparing Nutrient Agar Plates

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Preparing Nutrient Agar Plates

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Making and using nutrient agar plates is an easy and convenient way to test for contamination problems. You can pass anything, such as a pipette tip, or place any liquid, such as media, over or on a nutrient agar plate and incubate it to see if the object or piqued is contaminated with bacteria or yeast.

Required Equipment:

Disposable gloves
Autoclave
Autoclavable glass bottle
Foil – to cover top of bottle for autoclaving
DI water
Nutrient agar – a powder, stored under fumehood, Sigma product # N0394
Petri dishes for pouring
Thermally protective gloves

Method:

As recommended by Sigma web page.

1. Add 23g of nutrient agar per 1L of DI water.
2. Autoclave at 121°C for 20 minutes.
3. Allow solution to cool to ~ 50°C. You should keep a close watch over the solution as it cools; if you leave it too long, it will solidify in the jar and will be of no use. Do not pour the solution when it is too hot as it may damage the petri dishes.
4. Pour solution into petri dishes and allow it to cool to room temperature to set. In most cases, the pouring of the agar should be done in the laminar flow hood to maintain sterile conditions.

Plates may be stored in the fridge for up to 4 weeks for use.