COLLECTING SWABS FOR HERPES OR VARICELLA VIRUS DETECTION
BY DIRECT STAIN, CULTURE, OR PCR

GOAL: Collect cells from base of lesion (where most infected cells are) and vesicle fluid.

PROVIDED: Viral transport medium (M4 or UTM), 2-swab pack, Note: Use only the Dacron or flocked swabs provided to collect. Other swab types may interfere with detection.

NEED - NOT PROVIDED: Sterile syringe with needle or a scalpel blade; disinfectant; sterile swab to remove pus

INSTRUCTIONS:
1. Identify best vesicle to sample. Young vesicles have the highest yield; ulcerated or crusted lesions contain less virus.
2. Expose vesicle base – FIGURE 1 Note: Do not disinfect skin first; disinfectants can inactivate virus or inhibit PCR.
   - Early vesicle: Life up the vesicle cap with the syringe needle or scalpel blade.
   - Ulcer: Remove unwanted pus with a swab (not provided) without disturbing base of lesion.
   - Crust: Remove scab with needle to expose base of lesion
   - Vigorously scrub central base and sides of vesicle with the provided swab to obtain basal cells and fluid. This will cause momentary pain. Avoid inducing bleeding.

4. Inoculate the transport medium
   - Immediately place swab in transport medium. Break or cut off swab shaft, allowing tip to fall into the tube. Discard swab shaft.
   - Cap tube, label, place in biohazard bag, and send immediately to lab with completed requisition
5. Disinfect the wound