1. Bacterial culture swabs are used to collect throat specimens for culture.

2. Using a tongue blade to hold the tongue down, (anterior 1/3 of tongue only), take the specimen directly from the back of the throat, being careful not to touch the teeth, cheeks, gums, or tongue when inserting or removing the swab.

3. See Diagram:

4. The throat should be swabbed, not gently touched, in order to remove organisms adhering to the membrane. Sample any purulent, ulcerated, or inflamed areas. White patches in the tonsillar area are especially productive for streptococcal isolation.

5. After collection, place the swab into the transport medium, place in biohazard specimen bag and deliver to the reference laboratory as soon as possible.

6. Specimen is acceptable for culture up to 24 hours in transport medium.

7. NOTES:
   a. Plan to do cultures before mealtime or at least one hour after eating.
   b. Explain that the client may have a tickling sensation or gag reflex during the swabbing of the throat.
   c. Collection is easiest if the client is seated with head tilted back.
   d. Note on laboratory requisition if a specific organism is suspected.