

# Collection/Handling of Lab Specimens

Prior to specimen collection, review the specimen requirements for each procedure. The accuracy of laboratory testing depends on careful patient preparation, collection, handling, storage and transportation of specimens.

## Labeling of Specimens

All specimens, including blood and body fluids, must be labeled with two patient identifiers:

The patient's full name (last name, first name).

Patient-specific identifying number (preprinted requisition label, social security number, or date of birth).

If addressograph labels are available, they may be used however the date and time of collection as well as the initials of who drew the patient should be added to the label.

Specimens for blood bank testing must include date and time of collection and the signature of the person collecting the specimen, as well as the signature of the patient or a witness.

The laboratory will add the computer generated labels upon receipt of the specimen.

Specific specimen requirements must be verified by referring to the test directory online or by contacting us directly. Throughout the directory containers will be identified by the type of tube as well as the minimum volume required to perform the test. Please refer to the test directory for volume, specimen stability and processing requirements for individual tests.



# Specimen Containers

Testing accuracy depends on careful collection in the appropriate containers that will provide sufficient specimen. Listed below are the containers that are provided for collection.

Stopper Color	Anticoagulant	Specimen Type
Red	None	Serum
Red mottled (SST/Corvac)	None; contains gel separator	Serum
Gold	None; contains gel separator	Serum
Lavender	EDTA	Plasma/whole blood
Pink	EDTA	Plasma/whole blood
Green	Sodium heparin	Plasma/whole blood
Blue (liquid)	Sodium citrate	Plasma/whole blood
Pearl	EDTA	Plasma
Royal Blue	Sodium heparin (trace element tube)	Plasma/whole blood
Royal Blue	EDTA (for lead levels)	Plasma/whole blood
Royal Blue	None	Serum

Yellow	ACD solution A	Plasma/whole blood
Yellow	ACD solution B	Plasma/whole blood

## Urine Specimens

For random urine collections, the preferred specimen is the first urine voided in the morning. This is the most accurate single sample because of the high concentration of various urine constituents. Containers should be clean, closed tightly, labeled with two patient identifiers and double bagged before transport.

For 24-hour urine container, unless otherwise specified, preservatives are not added to the urine container during collection, however refrigeration is required. The patient should begin collection in the morning after discarding the first morning void. Note the time, and collect all urine until the same time the next morning, completing the collection by emptying the bladder and adding this to the sample. Note date and time of final collection.

Please refrigerate all urine specimens.

## Cultures/Tranettes

A sterile, disposable culture collection and transport system consisting of a plastic tube that contains a single or double rayon tipped swab and the appropriate transport media which will prevent drying of bacteria and maintain the proper pH. The following is a list of general guidelines for collection of microbiology cultures:

- Observe the expiration date and the condition of the package, using only unexpired, unopened and undamaged collection and transport systems.

- If possible, collect specimen prior to antibiotic therapy.

- Collect an adequate amount of specimen with as little contamination from indigenous microbiota as possible to ensure the sample will be representative of the infected site.

- After the specimen is collected, insert the swab into the plastic tube avoiding contamination with the external surface of the tube. When the cap is securely seated, crush the ampule at the bottom of the cuturette, or squeeze the middle of the charcoal chamber at the end of the tranette.

- Label the outside of the specimen container with a patient last name and first name and a patient-specific identifying number (preprinted requisition label, social security number or date of birth).

Indicate source of culture on requisition.

## **Specimen Packaging and Transport**

We would like all clients sending specimens to us to adopt a uniform specimen packaging procedure. In order to ensure the safety of our couriers, and to make our processing workflow as streamlined and trouble-free as possible, we ask that you follow these guidelines:

All specimens should be contained in sealed plastic specimen bags.

The specimen bags should display the biohazard logo.

Each specimen bag should contain only one patient's specimen(s).

Each specimen should be accompanied by the corresponding requisition sheet, folded and placed in the outside pocket of the specimen bag.

We will provide ziploc specimen bags upon request. To order bags, please call client services at 425-640-4179.