

Specimen Labeling, Storage and Transport

Specimen Labeling

1. Specimens should be labeled immediately after collection and in front of the patient.
2. Every specimen label, including smears, should have a MINIMUM of two patient identifiers:
 - Patient Family Name and First Name
 - Patient Date of Birth and/or NHI number
3. Then ideally:
 - "Date & Time" of specimen collection should be recorded on both the request form and specimen label.
 - The specimen site should be recorded on a swab label.
4. Histology Specimens must have all of the above, plus:
 - Doctor/surgeon name
 - Type of specimen

Specimen Storage

All biological specimens are best received at the laboratory on the day of collection. The following storage information should be observed to maximise result validity:

Must be Kept in the Fridge

1. All urines
2. Viral swabs (green top)
3. All Sputum (best fresh to lab each day)

Must Remain at Room Temperature

1. Culture swabs
2. Chlamydia swabs (lavender top)
3. Faeces specimens for Microbiology (best fresh to lab each day)
4. Bloods

Do NOT Store Overnight

1. Activated Partial Thromboplastin Time (APTT)
2. Aspirates
3. Fresh Tissue (not in formalin)
4. Blood Cultures
5. Coagulation Screen
6. Erythrocyte Sedimentation Rate (ESR)
7. Phosphate*
8. Potassium*

*Phosphate and Potassium can be left overnight, provided they are in SST tubes; and the tubes are spun for 12 minutes after collection.

Specimen Packaging and Transport

To comply with transport regulations and to maximise specimen integrity, specimens transported directly from a practice or surgical hospital by taxi must be transported in a white plastic sealable DML Transport Bag.

Medical Emergency & Priority Service (available 24hrs) - Queries ph 571 4034

Medical Emergency

Results can be provided within 2 hours of specimen collection on the following test range only.

- Haemoglobin
- Sodium
- WBC
- Potassium
- Platelets
- Urea
- D-Dimer
- Creatinine
- Troponin
- Glucose

For any other test, discuss availability with the Laboratory 571 4034.

Priority

Results can be provided by the time you indicate - (allow at least 3 hours).

Medical Emergency & Priority Sticker

Priority (> 3 hours) Time by:	<input type="text"/>	am/pm
Medical Emergency (2hrs [†])	<input type="checkbox"/>	
[†] Available for Emergency Tests		
Results: Ph	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fax <input type="checkbox"/>

Please complete the pink Medical Emergency/Priority portion on the request form or sticker (for computer generated request forms) including phone or fax number.

