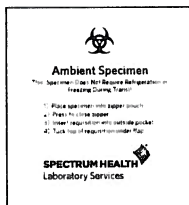


Specimen Integrity

Spectrum Health Laboratory Services is committed to specimen integrity. Specimen integrity directly affects the quality of laboratory results.

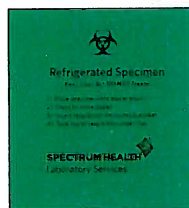
Spectrum Health Specimen Bags

Using the correct specimen bags for transportation to the laboratory can help ensure that all specimens arrive at the correct temperature for testing and are processed in the shortest possible time. Using the correct bags also plays a major role in reducing the number of patient re-draws.



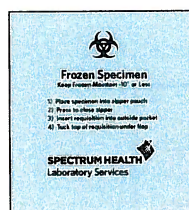
Ambient Bags

- These white bags are for specimens that need to maintain room temperature.
- Common specimens for this transport temperature:
 - Protimes (unspun)
 - Tissue specimens in formalin
 - Thin prep/Pap smear vials
 - CBCs



Refrigerated Bags

- These green bags are for specimens that need to be kept refrigerated.
- Common specimens for the green bag transport temperature:
 - Urine specimens
 - Chemistry profiles
 - M5RT viral cultures



Frozen Bags

- These blue/teal bags are for specimens that need to be kept frozen.
- Most frozen testing requires the specimen to be spun and poured over before freezing. If you have questions about freezing specimens, call the Laboratory Call Center at 616.774.7721.



STAT Bags

- These red bags are for specimens that need to be run immediately upon arrival in the laboratory.
- Use these bags when:
 - The patient's condition requires immediate laboratory results.
- Using a red STAT bag is the best way to ensure immediate laboratory services.



Priority Bags

- These purple bags are for specimens that need to be handled and processed immediately upon receipt in laboratory, or the integrity of the specimen will be compromised.
- Use these bags when:
 - specimens are sent to the lab unspun or unprocessed
 - specific test has time sensitive requirements (Examples: TB Spot test, Blood Cultures, Ammonia, ImmuKnow, Lymphocyte Blastogenesis Mitogens)

Specimen Collection

Quality test results start with quality collections. Spectrum Health provides instructions on acceptable specimen containers and preferred collection methods.

- The Spectrum Health lab catalog can be viewed online at spectrumhealth.org/labcatalog.
- Guides are available online for laboratory specimen collection devices and media, and outpatient specimen collection and handling.

Specimen Preparation

To help ensure that all specimens arrive in the laboratory at the correct temperature and with the best specimen integrity:

- Use the temperature-specific biohazard specimen transport bags provided by Spectrum Health.
- Verify that the specimen containers are not broken or leaking before forwarding them to the laboratory.

Summer Lockbox Instructions

During warm months (April to October), follow these steps for loading the lockbox to prevent overheating:

- Place a frozen cool pack in the bottom of the lockbox
- Layer three or four paper towels over the cool-pack for insulation
- Place refrigerated specimens on top of the paper towels
- Layer three or four paper towels over the refrigerated specimens for insulation
- Place ambient temperature specimens on top of the paper towels

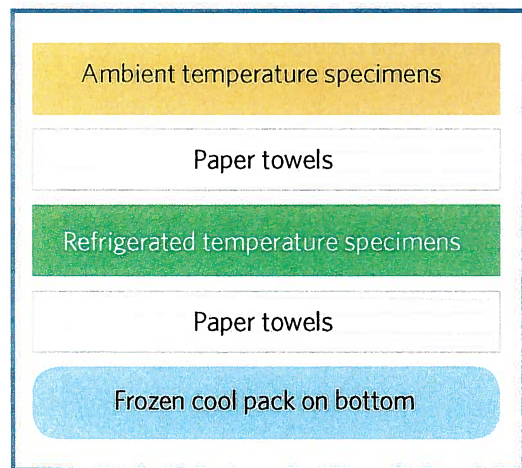


Diagram of a properly loaded lockbox for summer

- Frozen specimens should not be left in the lockbox for after-hours pickup. These tests may be better preserved in the office freezer until the next day's courier pickup.

Supply Orders

Spectrum Health Laboratory Services provides our clients with the necessary supplies to collect and transport specimens. Supplies may take up to five days to fill and deliver, so please order in advance whenever possible.

Supplies can be ordered by faxing a Spectrum Health supply requisition to the laboratory at 616.267.2085 or by calling. Supply requisitions also can be found online.

Contact Us

If you have questions, call the Spectrum Health laboratory call center at 616.774.7721

Winter Lockbox Instructions

During cold months (November to March), follow these steps for loading the lockbox to prevent freezing:

- Place a refrigerated cool pack in the bottom of the lockbox
- Place refrigerated temperature specimens on top of the cool pack
- Layer three or four paper towels over the refrigerated specimens for insulation
- Place ambient temperature specimens on top of the paper towels
- Place a non-refrigerated/ambient cool pack on top of the ambient specimens

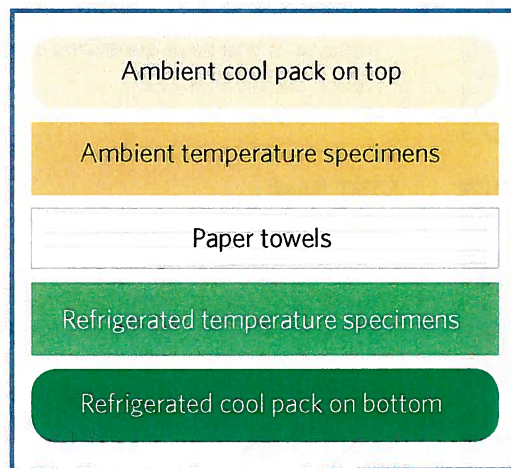


Diagram of a properly loaded lockbox for winter