

Policies – Bellin Health Laboratory

Animal Specimens

We generally do not test animal specimens except by special arrangement or emergency situations. Please contact Bellin Health Laboratory at 920-433-3652 or 800-236-1639 if you have any questions.

Billing

Account Billing—A statement is mailed to each account at the beginning of each month. The statement lists the tests performed, by patient and date of service, for the previous month.

Third Party Billing (including Medicare and Medical Assistance)—These charges are processed by Bellin Health Laboratory and do not appear on the monthly account statement. If you have not provided the proper and necessary information to receive reimbursement, Bellin Health Laboratory reserves the right to bill your account for these charges.

Pathology—All pathology and some cytology specimens are billed a professional component in addition to the technical (processing) component. Therefore, it is necessary to send complete patient billing information with all pathology specimens. Include the patient's address if the patient is to be billed directly.

Pap Smears—Pap smears that are considered abnormal upon screening will be referred to a pathologist for review. A professional fee will be billed by the pathologist. Billing information will be obtained from the clinic by Bellin Health Laboratory personnel.

Confidentiality of Results

Bellin Health Laboratory is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of patient information. To ensure Health Insurance and Portability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) compliance for the appropriate release of patient results, Bellin Health Laboratory has adopted the following policies:

Telephone Inquiry Policy—One of the following unique identifiers will be required:

- Bellin Health Laboratory accession ID number for specimen; **or**
- Patient account number from Bellin Health Laboratory; **or**
- Client accession ID number interfaced to Bellin Health Laboratory; **or**

- Identification by individual that he or she is, in fact, the “referring physician” identified on the requisition form by the Bellin Health Laboratory client

Facsimile Policy—Bellin Health Laboratory will only fax results to clients who have verified their facsimile numbers on Bellin's facsimile verification form. To request a copy of the form, please call Bellin Health Laboratory Customer Service at 920-433-3652 or toll free at 800-236-1639 as soon as possible.

PC Interface Customers

Please refer to your separate training manuals for information regarding test requisitioning, labeling, and shipping. For any questions, call Bellin Health Laboratory Customer Service at 920-433-3652 or toll free at 800-236-1639.

Referred Tests

Bellin Health Laboratory accepts specimens for testing not performed in our main laboratory. We handle these specimens as a convenience to our customers. The testing laboratory is noted on the test result report. The days a test is performed by the referred laboratory is listed in the individual test listings.

Specimen Retention

All specimens with the exception of some whole blood specimens and some of those sent to outside reference laboratories are kept for 7 days after receipt into our laboratory. If it is necessary to repeat a test or to request additional testing, we recommend that you contact us immediately. It may be possible to perform additional tests without requiring additional specimens to be submitted. When you contact us, please have available the patient's name, account number, date of original testing, original tests requested, tests you would like to add, and appropriate diagnosis coding. Tests being billed to Medicare or Medical assistance must have a diagnosis code.

For testing which has been forwarded to another reference laboratory, please contact Bellin Health Laboratory Customer Service at 920-433-3652 or toll free at 800-236-1639. The reference laboratory may have retained the specimen in question at their facility.

Supplies

Mailing cartons, specimen vials, special specimen collection containers and kits, sterile vials, stool containers, and request forms are supplied without charge. Due to compliance issues, only supplies directly related to testing performed at Bellin Health Laboratories can be provided.

Test Cancellation/Unacceptable Specimens Test cancellation requests received prior to test setup are honored at no charge. If the test has already been completed or setup, we will not be able to cancel the test in question, and a charge will be sent to the client.

A test may be cancelled by Bellin Health Laboratory for a variety of reasons. All of these situations involve specimen integrity and therefore may affect the result. These include but are not limited to:

- **Freeze/Thaw Cycles:** Specimens for certain tests may not be subjected to freeze/thaw cycles without compromising the integrity of the test itself.
- **Hemolysis:** Hemolysis occurs when red blood cells are destroyed and hemoglobin has escaped into the serum or plasma. There are multiple causes for hemolysis, including but not limited to red blood cell trauma during specimen draw or improper handling of a specimen after collection. Hemolyzed serum or plasma varies from light pink to bright red in direct relation to the amount of red cell trauma. Bellin Health Laboratory has a policy in place for handling hemolyzed specimens received into the laboratory. This policy involves an initial visual inspection of each specimen received in the areas of the laboratory where hemolysis may affect test results. If a specimen is submitted for single analyte testing, each ordered test will be evaluated. In the case of a panel with multiple analytes, the deciding factor will be based on the analyte with the lowest allowable limit of free hemoglobin. The entire panel will be either performed or cancelled based on that determination. Should you need a specific analyte(s) from the panel that may have a higher allowable limit, please contact our laboratory within seven days of specimen receipt.
- **Hyperbilirubinemia (Icteria):** This is due to an abnormally large amount of bilirubin present in circulating blood. The serum or plasma of an icteric specimen varies from dark to bright yellow. If a specimen is icteric, a repeat specimen may be requested when the ictericia affects test results.
- **Incorrect Container Use/Improper Fill Volume:** For certain coagulation testing, fill volumes when using the light-blue sodium citrate tubes is critical. If tubes are not filled to the correct volume (indicated on tube) the test cannot be reliably performed. Either over filling or under filling will cause specimen rejection.
- **Incorrect Specimen Container:** See individual test listings for appropriate collection and transport container for each test.
- **Incorrect Transport Medium:** Certain microbiology tests must be collected and transported with a particular transport medium to preserve the specimen. See “Culture Specimen Transport Media” and “Swab Transport Systems” in “Specimen Collection and Preparation” in “General Information.”
- **pH of Urine:** For certain referred testing, urine must be collected with the addition of acid as a preservative (see individual test listings). If specimen does not have proper pH to accurately perform the test, a new specimen may be requested.
- **Quantity Not Sufficient (ONS):** A certain volume of specimen is necessary to perform any test. The test listings provide the volume of specimen necessary. If volume received is less than minimum volume needed, test is cancelled.
- **Specimen Handling after Collection:** In addition to proper temperature storage, certain specimens need to be processed and/or handled within a certain amount of time after collection. Failure to process specimen as indicated in the individual test listings may cause specimen rejection and/or unreliable results.
- **Temperature:** Specimens must be stored and transported at proper temperature found in the individual test listing.
- **Turbidity (Lipemia):** Turbid, cloudy, or milky serum is usually produced by the presence of lipids in the blood. It is generally recommended that a patient fast 8 to 12 hours before obtaining a specimen since a recent meal produces transient lipemia. For certain tests, such as total lipids, cholesterol, or triglycerides, a notation is made on the report noting possibility of interference.

Test Turnaround Time

Each individual test listing indicates the days a test is performed as a guide to expected turnaround times. If there is repeat testing, additional time may be required to receive results. When considering referred testing, take into account specimen transport time, both from your facility as well as to the referral laboratory.

