

# Specimen Processing and Storage

Leakproof containers are provided by the laboratory for collection and transport of specimens. Please be sure that screw-on lids are tightened (avoid overtightening which can result in leakage).

SHARPS® used during collection must be removed before transport. For syringe specimens, replace the needle with a Luer-tip cap.

General processing instructions unless otherwise specified:

- **Blood:** Mix all tubes gently by inversion 8 to 10 times immediately after draw, then:
  - Gold barrier (gel) tubes: Allow to clot upright for 30 minutes (60 minutes maximum). Centrifuge for 10-15 minutes (20 minutes maximum). Refrigerate promptly.
  - Lavender-top (EDTA) tubes: Refrigerate promptly.
  - Blue-top (sodium citrate) tubes: Ambient temperature only
  - Red-top tubes: Allow to clot at ambient temperature for 30 minutes; within 2 hours centrifuge for 10-15 minutes, (30 minutes maximum), then remove serum. Refrigerate serum promptly. If unable to centrifuge tube before courier pickup, store uncentrifuged tube at ambient temperature. Place in a transport bag labeled with an “Unspun” sticker. Call laboratory for prompt pickup of “Unspun: sample..
  - Pink-top (EDTA): Refrigerate promptly.
  - Grey-top (potassium oxalate/sodium fluoride) tubes: Refrigerate promptly.
  - Green barrier (gel) tubes: Centrifuge within 60 minutes after draw. Spin for 10-15 minutes (20 minutes maximum), then refrigerate promptly.
  - White barrier (gel) tubes: Spin *immediately* after draw for 10-15 minutes, then *immediately* refrigerate.
  - Yellow-top (ACD) (liquid anticoagulant, no gel) tubes: Do not centrifuge. Store at ambient temperature, do not refrigerate
- **Urine and Other Body Fluids:** Refrigerate promptly after collection. For timed urine specimens, eg, 24-hour collections, keep refrigerated throughout collection and during transport.
- **Stool (all tests except Rotavirus):** Store at ambient temperature after collection.
- **Stool for Rotavirus:** Refrigerate after collection.
- **Culture swabs (aerobic and anaerobic):** Store at ambient temperature after collection.
- **Group B Strep Culture (LIM broth):** Store at ambient temperature after collection.
- **Vaginal Wet Prep (Diamonds media):** Store at ambient temperature after collection.
- **Pertussis Culture (wire swab inoculated in charcoal transport media):** Store at ambient temperature after collection.
- **Viral Culture:** Refrigerate media before and after inoculation.
- **Respiratory Syncytial Virus:** Refrigerate after collection.
- **Influenza (Flu A/B) swab:** Refrigerate after collection.
- **Chlamydia trachomatis swab kit or urine kit:** Store at ambient temperature after collection.
- **Neisseria gonorrhoeae swab kit or urine kit:** Store at ambient temperature after collection.
- **Blood Culture:** Store at ambient temperature after collection.
- **Tissue:** Collect in container with 10% formalin for anatomic pathology studies. For culture, collect in a clean, sterile container. Store at ambient temperature, do not refrigerate.
- **Paps, ThinPrep® Vials and/or Slides:** Store at ambient temperature.
- **Summary:** Unless otherwise indicated in the collection procedure, general recommendations for specimen storage after collection are:
  - Refrigerate:
    - Blood: lavender-top (EDTA) tubes, gray-top (potassium oxalate/sodium fluoride) tubes, pink-top (EDTA) tubes and centrifuged gel (gold-top, light green top, white-top) tubes
    - Urine
    - Sputum
    - Body fluids
    - Body fluids for cytology
    - Stool for *Rotavirus*
    - Viral culture (eg, herpes) swab
    - RSV culture swab
    - Influenza (Flu A/B) swab
  - Ambient Temperature:
    - Blood: light blue-top (sodium citrate) tubes, red-top tubes, and yellow-top (ACD) tubes and non-centrifuged gel (gold-top or light green-top) tubes
    - Swabs for culture (aerobic and anaerobic)
    - Stool (except for *Rotavirus*)
    - Group B strep specimens (collected in LIM broth)

- Vaginal wet preps (collected in Diamonds media)
- Pertussis culture swab
- *Chlamydia trachomatis* swab kit or urine kit
- *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* swab kit or urine kit
- Paps (ThinPrep®) vials or slides
- Tissue in 10% formalin
- Specimens on glass slides
- Blood Culture vials

Place each patient's specimens into 1 biobag, and press along the top edge to completely seal the bag. Fold the request form and place inside the outer pocket of the biobag. Store bag at appropriate temperature until transportation to the laboratory.