

Quality specimens = Quality results

From collection to transport, Spectrum Health Regional Laboratory expects quality specimens. A quality specimen is one that has been collected and transported, keeping specimen integrity and patient identification intact.

Collection

Please visit spectrumhealth.testcatalog.org for complete specimen collection instructions. To have the most up-to-date information available, always double check the catalog prior to collecting a specimen. Be sure to take note of any important collection information and specimen stability times.

Labeling and Orders

Due to the large volume and wide variety of specimens received by Spectrum Health Regional Laboratory, identification is extremely important to prevent possible errors in treatment. Proper labeling and correct orders also decreases time spent in order to investigate and discover the missing information. All specimens should be labeled immediately after collection with **2** patient identifiers. Remember: Do it right! Label on-site!

Labels should always include:

- ✓ **Patient's First and Last Name** (no initials)
- ✓ **Patient's Date of Birth**
- ✓ **Date and Time of Collection**
- ✓ **Collector's Initials**
- ✓ **For Non-blood Specimens: Type or Description**
(i.e. Urine, CSF, Pleural, left or right, etc.)

Orders should always include:

- ✓ **Patient's Information** (Full name, date of birth, address and phone number)
- ✓ **Diagnosis** (ICD-10 code or signs and symptoms)
- ✓ **Patient's Insurance Information**
- ✓ **Ordering Provider's Information**
(Clinician's full name, address, phone and fax)

The quality of results is dependent on accuracy of specimen collection and labeling. **If identification information is not complete, is inaccurate, or the specimen is improperly labeled or collected, Spectrum Health Regional Laboratory reserves the right to reject the specimen and require recollection.**

Transport

Spectrum Health Regional Laboratory provides plastic, color-coded, biohazard bags for transporting specimens. Using the correct bag ensures that specimens arrive at the correct temperature for testing and processing.

- Ambient temperature specimens should be placed in a white bag.
- Refrigerated specimens should be placed in a green bag.
- Frozen specimens should be placed in a blue bag.
- STAT specimens (that which require immediate laboratory results) should be placed in a red bag.
- Priority bags are purple and are for specimens that need to be handled and processed immediately to maintain integrity (such as specimens that need to be spun).

Remember when placing specimens in transport bags:

- ✓ All blood specimens from a single patient should be placed in one bag.
- ✓ Urine or body fluids should be bagged separately. Large glass bottles of fluid should also be bagged.
- ✓ Two patients' samples should never be combined in one bag.
- ✓ Always make sure lids to containers are on correctly and tight. Leaky specimen containers will result in cancellation and recollection.
- ✓ Never send syringes with needles attached.
- ✓ Paper Orders, extra labels or eShare/Epic slips should be placed in the pouch on the outside of the bag.

For more information please contact the Laboratory Call Center at 616.774.7721