

# Frequently Asked Questions from Nursing Skills Presentations

1. Where can we find the order of draw for the blood collection tubes?

Order of draw on Lab Test Catalog (Lab Man) left side bar link – Order of Draw for Multiple Collections

[Order of Draw for Blood Collection tubes](#)

2. Do we need a new order for changing an = Lytes to a regular lytes order?

Okay for electrolytes being done in the laboratory – but not between EPOC (Point of Care) and the laboratory. If an EPOC is ordered and you want to change it to an in-lab order for lytes then a new order does need to be written.

3. Does the blue line on the label of blue top tubes indicate the proper fill line?

No, the blue line is not standard for the amount in the tube and can vary from lot to lot of tubes according to the manufacturer. Use the vacuum in the tube to fill blue top tubes for coagulation tests. There is a clear line on the top of the tube which indicates the minimum fill line.

4. Can I take a drop of blood from a green or lavender tube to do a glucometer or an EPOC test?

Glucometer – Okay

EPOC – No

5. How about using a drop from a blood gas syringe?

Glucometer – Okay

EPOC – Okay

6. Do all blood collection tubes need to be mixed or only the blue tops?

All blood collection tubes should be gently inverted 8- 10 times as soon as possible to mix the anticoagulant or clot activator (dependent on the tube type).

7. What's the best way to get minimum volumes needed when drawing a small child or infant?

List of some common tests that can be combined, and the minimum collection volumes on Lab Test Catalog on CHILD.

[Collection Combination Guide](#)

8. Could the lab not cancel tests in CIS when specimen is unacceptable and allow the nurse to use the existing orders rather than having to get a new order to repeat the blood draw?

No, the specimen needs to be canceled with a reason for the test cancellation for all specimens that are obtained. The new specimen will then have the correct time of recollection.

9. Can we put special lab collection instructions like collect and transport on ice in Lab Active Orders?

Not at this time.

10. How long can a syringe sit before the blood should be transferred to the collection tubes?

As soon as possible, the clotting mechanism in the blood starts immediately upon collection and if the blood isn't placed with the anticoagulant and mixed right away the clotting process can interfere with the test results. The sample may clot or become hemolyzed as it is transferred to the collection tubes.

11. Do ionized calciums have to be sent on ice?

No, they do not have to be sent on ice, but they must be received in the lab within 15 minutes of collection.

12. Does sending a specimen on ice that does not require ice hurt the specimen?

Some tests are acceptable either on ice or at room temperature. Coagulation tests, for example, should not be sent on ice.

13. Which tests can be combined?

See chart on Lab Test Catalog or call the lab.  
[Specimen Collection Quick Guide](#)

14. Why is a green top faster to run than a gold top?

A gold top has to clot solid before it can be centrifuged to obtain the serum specimen for testing. A green top contains heparin as an anticoagulant and does not need to clot before being centrifuged. Depending on the patient condition and how the sample was collected it can take up to 30 to 60 minutes for some gold top tubes to clot.

15. Overfilling and underfilling tubes is not a good practice, so why does the Laboratory test catalog say that some tests require only 0.5 in the tube?

If only a small amount of blood can be collected then it is best practice to use a micro-collection (microtainer) tube which holds between 0.25mL and 0.5 mL. Purple top tubes have been validated to be accurate for CBC/ Diff down to 0.7mL in a 4.0 mL size tube. Using minimum volumes means that the test can only be

performed once and if there is a problem with the analyzer the specimen can be lost and recollection will be necessary.

16. Can clotted specimens be used for blood cultures?

No.

17. Can we have a visual aid to help with which type swabs should be used for which microbiology culture specimen?

Yes, it's done and on the Lab Test Catalog on CHILD.

[Swab Guide for Nurses](#)

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