

SPECIMEN LABELING POLICY

Purpose: To ensure accurate patient identification and to provide our clients with reliable results on correctly identified specimens in a timely manner. All laboratory specimens will be labeled at the point of collection and submitted to the laboratory in an appropriately labeled and well-constructed container provided by the laboratory.

LABORATORY REQUISITIONS

Inpatient requisitions

When the computer is up:

The computer generates inpatient specimen labels/requisitions when an order is entered. This label should be attached to the specimen container with the collection date and time and the collector's initials written on the label. Inpatient specimen labels are generated at the bedside when the patient is drawn. This label which contains the collection date and time and the collector's identification should be attached to the specimen at bedside.

When the computer is down we require the following information on the paper requisition:

- patient complete name
- date of birth
- sex
- medical record number
- patient location
- ordering Physician's name
- test orders/test requests checked or written appropriately with priority.
- height and weight if required for testing/reporting
- fasting/non-fasting designation if pertinent to reporting results.

Addressograph labels are recommended for patient demographic information.

Outpatient requisitions require the following information:

- collection date, time, and identification of who drew the specimen
- patient complete name
- date of birth
- sex
- address
- phone number
- ordering Physician's code and name
- insurance information
- diagnostic code or narrative diagnosis, signs or symptoms
- test orders/test requests checked or written appropriately with priority
- height and weight if required for testing/reporting
- fasting/non-fasting designation if pertinent to reporting results.

Department Requisition Requirements:

Microbiology requisitions:

Specify source/site of culture and culture type requested (aerobic/anaerobic/viral/etc.).

Anatomic Pathology requisitions:

It is essential that Anatomic Pathology requisitions contain accurate and pertinent clinical history. This is vital for the direction of studies to be performed and for optimal diagnosis.

Cytology requisitions:

These requisitions must be personally reviewed by the individual obtaining the specimen to assure that pertinent and accurate clinical history is obtained. All requisitions must delineate source of specimens.

PATIENT IDENTIFICATION & SPECIMEN LABELING:

It is the responsibility of the staff collecting the specimen to identify and draw the patient correctly and label the specimen at the point of collection. For Inpatients, follow current policy outlining requirements for collection in Cerner Bridge, or applicable downtime process if the EMR is unavailable. For Outpatient specimens the collector must ask the patient to state his/her name and his/her birth date and match that information against the requisition. ALL samples must be labeled at the patient's bed or chair side immediately after collection and within sight of the patient. Tubes are not to be labeled prior to collecting specimens.

Required information on the specimen label:

- patient's **complete name**
- medical record # (inpatient),
- date and time of collection, initials or ID # of the staff obtaining the specimen.
- Multiple specimens on the same patient require all labels to be filled out completely.

Urine Containers are pre-labeled by the staff responsible prior to giving the container to the patient for collection.

DEPARTMENTAL LABELING REQUIREMENTS:

Cytology: The specimen slide must be labeled with the patient's full name and date of birth written in pencil on the frosted end of the glass slide. If no slides are received, vial/container must be labeled with the patient's full name and date of birth. Time of collection is not necessary for cytology specimens.

Blood Bank: Patient's **complete name**

Medical record number and/or birth date (IP samples need both DOB and medical record number)

Date and time of collection

Phlebotomist initials or ID #

Blood Bank Band number - See separate policy under "Transfusion Services Special Information."

SPECIMEN REJECTION POLICY:

Unlabeled or Mislabeled specimens will not be accepted if labeling is not accurate and complete as in the following scenarios:

- First name or last name or both on the specimen do not match the requisition.
- Specimen is unlabeled even though it arrives in the lab in a plastic specimen bag with a requisition.
- Patient's **complete name** does not appear on the specimen
- Initials and nicknames are not acceptable.

SURGICAL PATHOLOGY SPECIMENS:

Inpatient specimens that are unlabeled or mislabeled should be returned to site of origin (i.e. OR) for their personnel to correct. Any returned specimens are entered into the specimen rejection log.

Outpatient specimens that are mislabeled or unlabeled will require a phone call to the doctor's office explaining that the specimen will be returned. A copy of the requisition will be kept in the specimen rejection folder. A specimen return form should be filled out and sent back with the specimen. The courier must deliver the specimen to an individual and get the return form signed.

Exceptions: Irretrievable Specimens: When an unlabeled specimen cannot be safely or accurately obtained again and discarding it might cause harm to the patient. (i.e.: spinal fluids, biopsies, drug induced tests like dexamethasone, blood gases on patients that are coding, etc.). In these cases, the physician must sign the lab mislabeled/unlabeled documentation form before results can be reported.