

In general, the collection of all specimens other than blood (i.e. urine, sputum, swabs, stool, body fluids, etc.) is the responsibility of the nursing staff and physicians. All specimens collected should be delivered to the Lab central receiving area as soon as possible to avoid specimen deterioration.

DOCUMENTATION OF DATE AND TIME OF SPECIMEN COLLECTION on all specimens submitted to the laboratories is critical in determining the validity of certain test results and for sequential result reporting.

- **Microbiology Specimens**

The effectiveness of the clinical microbiology laboratory depends upon the adequacy and conditions of the specimen received for examination. If specimens are not properly obtained and processed, or are not representative, the clinical microbiology laboratory can contribute little to any investigation. When properly collected specimens cannot be cultured promptly after collection, they should be preserved in the appropriate storage or transport medium.

- **24 Hour Urine Collection**

In order to comply with the DHMC Blood borne Pathogen Exposure Plan and to ensure the best analytical integrity of collected specimens, the Department of Pathology has refined, and will enforce, strict standards for outpatient timed urine collection.

Effective January 1, 2008, only DHMC approved specimen containers will be acceptable for submission for laboratory testing. These containers will be provided to the patient by one of the following two routes.

- 1) Providers should refer on-campus patients (with their requisition for testing) to the blood draw collection area. The patients will be given the appropriately labeled containers and instructions (example attached) on collection and storage. Once collection is complete, the specimen will be returned to the blood collection area where it will be inspected to ensure that it has been properly collected, timed and dated and labeled before being submitted to the Laboratory for analysis. The blood draw area will fill out a log sheet of each drop off.

or

- 2) Patients who do not have access to the blood collection area prior to their visit at DHMC will be sent the appropriate collection container by the laboratory's Client Response Center (CRC) (650-2200) upon the request of the patient's provider. The provider will call the CRC and provide the patient's name, MRN, and mailing address (a completed requisition will be requested at that time). Upon receipt of complete testing information, the CRC will label and ship a collapsible, properly labeled urine container, a copy of the requisition, and instructions (example attached) for collection to the Patient via UPS (note: because of DOT regulations only containers without chemical preservatives can be shipped to patients).

The Patient will be responsible for returning the specimen and all associated paperwork (e.g. requisition) to the blood collection area. **Under no circumstances** should a used collection container be mailed to the Medical Center.

Please refer to the [sample instruction letter to patients](#) for further instructions.