Policies

Billing

• **Boulder Community Reference Lab (BCRL) (Non-Hospital Patients); Boulder Medical Center (BMC and BMC-Avista):**
  — **Client** — For billing client, mark the “BILL ACCOUNT” area on the BCRL test request form. Be sure to complete the BCRL test request form completely and concisely, including client identifier if applicable. This will avoid unnecessary phone calls regarding patient demographic information and will ensure that you have complete information on your invoice. You will receive an itemized statement at the end of each month. The statement will contain an alphabetical list of patients, date of service, service code, test name, and test fee.
  — **Patient** — If you elect to have BCRL bill your patients, please make sure that the patient demographics section of the test request form is completely filled out and that you have included a copy of both the front and back side of the patient’s insurance card. Also, please mark the “BILL PATIENT” area on the BCRL test request form.
  — Questions concerning BCRL billing should be made to (303) 440-2072.

• **Inpatient/Outpatient Lab (Hospital Patients):**
  — Hospital patients will be billed through the hospital billing system. Questions concerning billing should be made to (303) 440-2072.

Cancellation of Tests

Cancellations received prior to test set up will be honored at no charge. Requests received following test set up cannot be honored. A report will be issued automatically and charged appropriately.

Infectious Material

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in its regulations of July 21, 1980, has listed organisms/diseases for which special packaging and labeling must be applied. See “List of Infectious Substances.” Required special containers, packaging, and shipping instructions can be obtained from BCHL by using the “Request for Supplies” form.

Shipping regulations require that specimens thought to contain any of the organisms on the “List of Infectious Substances” be shipped in a special manner. See “Infectious Material.” A copy of the regulations can be requested from the International Air Transport Association (IATA); they may be contacted by phone at (202) 628-9292 or faxed at (202) 628-9448.

Ordering Protocol

• **Routine Tests:**
  Routine tests will be run within 4 hours of receipt of specimen to Laboratory for most tests. Routine morning orders should be drawn between 4:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m.
  Those tests requiring prolonged incubation or multiple steps, i.e. microbiology, hepatitis, HIV, etc., will adhere to the published times in the Laboratory Services Directory. If there is a delay in testing, such as instrument malfunction, reagent shortage, quality concerns, etc., the technologist responsible for that testing area will notify the appropriate units and practitioner that a delay will occur. The technologist will use good judgment as to who should be notified as it is not feasible to notify all clients.

• **STAT Tests:**
  STAT tests will be run within 60 minutes of receipt. The HIS computer is programmed so that you cannot order a test as STAT if it is not available/performed in the lab on a STAT basis. The practitioner must contact a pathologist if there is a question regarding the STAT policy for any given test. Otherwise, the test will be drawn STAT and run ROUTINE.

• **Urgent Tests:**
  Urgent tests will be run as soon as possible.
  **Note:** DO NOT ORDER TESTS STAT, URGENT, TIMED, OR TODAY UNLESS SPECIFICALLY ORDERED AS SUCH BY THE PRACTITIONER.

• **Comments:**
  The following are appropriate comments to be used when ordering lab tests:
  — Results by “time needed”
  — Today (will be drawn and run today-at lab’s convenience)
  — This evening
  — Pre-op (include time of surgery)
  **Note:** 1. “Do Now” is not an appropriate comment. If a physician orders a test in this manner, ask him/her to be more specific.
2. If test results are needed within an hour of order time, order tests as STAT.
3. If test results are needed within 4 hours of order time, order tests as Urgent.

- **Timed Tests:**
  Timed tests will be run routinely or batched with the next STAT test unless specified otherwise. For example, if results of a glucose test are needed by the next insulin dose, please comment “results by 5:00 p.m.”

- **Fasting Tests:**
  Fasting tests should be done only when the patient is fasting; otherwise the results are difficult to interpret. The most common tests that should be drawn fasting are chemistry profiles, iron/TIBC, cholesterol, triglycerides, and lipid profiles.

- **Ordered By:**
  The “Ordered By” portion of the lab order refers to the practitioner. Do not put your initials here. If the practitioner’s name is not entered, the laboratory must take extra time to look up the name before the report can be sent to the correct location.

- **Order Tests as Written by the Practitioner:**
  If the practitioner has written an unclear order, such as “do now,” please ask him/her to clarify the order. Do not order timed tests unless specifically ordered “timed” by the practitioner. If only part of the order is STAT, don’t order all the tests STAT, but do run through the “today” orders at the same time as the STATs so that they may be drawn at the same time. Indicate in the comment section of the order “draw with STATs.”

- **When “HIS” is Down:**
  When the hospital computer is down, tests should be ordered using the downtime form which is available in the SCOOP. This from may be accessed via the FORMS>CLINCAL FROMS>LABORATORY>DT Lab Request From. The lab will run these orders when the computer comes back up. To avoid duplicated orders and confusion, please do not order these tests in HIS when it comes back on-line.

- **Microbiology:**
  Blood cultures — one charge for each culture, i.e., **Do not** order one blood culture and type in the comment “blood culture x 2.” Do comment if the physician specifies a time interval between cultures, e.g., “blood cultures 5 minutes apart.”

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**Patient Identification Accuracy**

BCH must adhere to proper identification of patient specimens for good patient care, for both quality and safety reasons. The need for proper identification is specified by the College of American Pathologists (CAP) Laboratory General Checklist Commentary GEN 40700: “Specimens lacking proper identification or an accompanying requisition should not be accepted by the laboratory.” To be compliant, it is important that each specimen be properly labeled with the same demographics that appear on the paperwork. If a discrepancy has been identified upon specimen arrival at BCH, we will contact you to make you aware of the discrepancy and cancel the test order.

**Radioactive Specimens**

Specimens from patients receiving radioactive tracers or radioactive material should be labeled as such. Specimens are not routinely tested at BCH for background radioactivity. This radioactivity may invalidate the results of radioimmunoassays.

**Research Projects**

Research projects will be approved on an individual basis. Please call for details.

**Specimen Handling**

When a specimen is delivered to the laboratory, it must be logged into the specimen log. **ALL** sections of the sign-in log must be completed, including date and time of collection and initials of the person collecting the specimen. Also located here is a basket for specimen drop-off.

- **Specimens to be handed directly to Lab Personnel:**
  - ABGs
  - Body fluids
  - CSF
  - Cold agglutinin
  - STATs and Urgent (all specimen types)
  - Stool for ova and parasites
  - Viral cultures

- **Specimens to be Placed in Specimen Drop-Off Basket:**
  - Green-top (heparin) tubes
  - Grey-top (potassium oxalate/sodium fluoride) tubes
— Lavender-top (EDTA) tubes
— Occult blood slides
— Red-top tubes
— Routine pink-top tubes
— Routine cultures (other than urine)
— SST® tubes
— Cytology specimens
— Routine cord bloods
— Routine urines
— Urine cultures (If a STAT urinalysis is also needed, hand the specimen to a lab employee.)

Specimen Labeling

• **Routine Specimens:** Specimens sent to the laboratory must be labeled in accordance with BCH, Patient Care Policy 4.002. The lab reserves the right to reject specimens that are not correctly labeled. The floor will be notified of any errors in labeling.

• **Blood Bank Cross-match Tubes:** Blood Bank cross-match tubes must be labeled with patient’s name (last, first, and middle initial) spelled correctly, date of birth, phlebotomist’s initial or employee number, and the date and time of draw. The Medical Record number or Social Security number may be used for outpatients or John/Jane Does. A unique Blood Bank identifier must be on the specimen tube and patient armband. A patient label may be used. See “Blood Banking” for more information.

• **Microbiology Specimens:** Microbiology specimens must have all the information given in BCH, Patient Care Policy 4.002, and in addition, the collection site must be noted.

Pathology Specimens

Pathology specimens must be accompanied by a requisition form completed with the date, patient’s name, hospital number or home address, sex, date of birth, physician, source of specimen, and clinical history. Boulder Community Hospital forms need to include both pre- and post-operative diagnosis. BVP forms need only the post-operative diagnosis.

Specimen Rejection

All tests are unique in their testing requirements. To avoid specimen rejection or delayed turnaround times, please check the “Specimen Required” field within each test. You will be notified of rejected or problem specimens upon receipt.

Please review the following conditions prior to submitting a specimen to BCHL:
• Full 24 hours for timed urine collection
• pH of urine
• Lack of hemolysis/lipemia
• Specimen type (plasma, serum, whole blood, etc.)
• Specimen volume
• Patient information requested
• Patient/specimen properly identified
• Specimen container (metal-free, separation gel, appropriate preservative, etc.)
• Transport medium
• Temperature (ambient, frozen, refrigerated)

Supplies

Mailing cartons, specimen vials, special specimen collection containers and kits, sterile vials, stool containers, and request forms are supplied without charge. See “Supplies” for a complete listing of supplies available.

Test Turnaround Time

This catalog lists the days on which the test is set up as a guide to expected turnaround times. Repeated tests take additional time.

Unlisted Tests

New procedures are developed throughout the year; therefore, some tests are not listed in this catalog. For information about unlisted tests, call our Client Services area.

Unsatisfactory Analytic Results

If BCHL is unable to obtain a satisfactory analytic result, there is no charge.