

 Penn Medicine	University of Pennsylvania Health System Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Division of Laboratory Medicine Lab Medicine Administration	Page 1 of 2 Version: 1.0.1
General Laboratory Specimen Collection Guidelines		Effective: 7/3/2018 Modified: 7/3/2018

General Laboratory Specimen Collection Guidelines

Test Ordering

- The laboratory will only perform testing written or electronically requested by an authorized individual, such as a physician or other practitioner, who has been approved by the Pennsylvania State Department of Health.
- Refer to the UPHS lab test directory (<https://testmenu.com/UPHS>) for the proper ordering and collection requirements for specific tests.

Proper Identification and Labeling of Specimens

- All specimens should be labeled at the time of collection and in the presence of the patient with patient name and medical record number or DOB.
- If a specimen is accompanied by a manual requisition, patient information on the specimen label must match the information on the requisition.
- Cerner labels must be placed straight and vertically on specimen tubes directly under the cap. Make sure there is an area left that allows the blood/fluid inside the tube to be visible.
- Ensure the Cerner label has the correct date and time listed before affixing to the specimen.
- Mislabeled, unlabeled, and specimens with mismatched requisitions will be rejected and cancelled.

Specimen Transport

- Submit samples to lab in double plastic bags.
- Ensure that container lids are attached securely. If a specimen is received leaking, testing may be subject to cancellation.
- Before sending a sample to the lab, make sure that stability requirements are met – if a sample needs to be at room temperature, sent on ice, frozen, protected from light, etc. If a specimen is received outside acceptable handling requirements, testing will be rejected or cancelled.
- Specimens received with a needle or syringe attached will be rejected.

Any questions about specimen collection or specimen transport requirements should be directed to the laboratory at 1-800-PENNLAB (1-800-736-6522).

Proper Order of Drawing Tubes

Tube Color	Specimen Type	Additive	Common Laboratory Use	
	Blood Cultures/ SPS / ACD	Blood Culture or whole blood	Bacterial Growth Medium Sodium Polyethanol Sulfonate Acid Citrate Dextrose	Microbiology specimens
	Blue	Whole blood and plasma	Sodium Citrate	Coagulation testing
	Red	Serum	No additive	Chemistry, infectious disease testing
	Gold	Serum	Clot activator and gel separator	Chemistry, Endocrinology testing
	Light Green	Plasma	Lithium Heparin and gel separator	Chemistry testing
	Green	Whole blood	Sodium or Lithium Heparin	Chemistry Testing
	Lavender	Whole blood and plasma	K ₂ or K ₃ EDTA	Hematology Testing
	Pink	Whole blood	K ₂ EDTA	Blood bank testing
	Pearl	Plasma	K ₂ EDTA and gel separator	Molecular testing
	Gray	Whole blood and plasma	Potassium oxalate and/or Sodium fluoride	Glucose testing
	Royal Blue	Whole blood/plasma or serum	K ₂ EDTA or clot activator	Heavy metal testing