



## General Specimen Collection and Labeling Guidelines

To ensure accurate results, specimens must be collected, labeled and transported to the laboratory in accordance with test-specific guidelines. For additional information, refer to the appropriate collection guideline and/or test entry in the Lab Test Directory.

### Standard Labeling Procedure

Positive patient identification and accurate specimen labeling is essential for reliable specimen analysis and reporting. **The label must contain 2 identifiers.**

For specimens collected in outpatient locations, standard label requirements include the following information on the specimen label:

- Patient Name - First and last (no nicknames or abbreviations)
- Secondary Identifier - Medical record number, date of birth, or other unique identifier
- Date and time of collection
- Initials of collector

### Improperly Labeled Specimens

Specimens will be considered unacceptable for analysis if:

- The specimen label contains incomplete/incorrect patient name or medical record number/date of birth. **A specimen label must contain 2 identifiers.**
- A label is not affixed to the specimen.

Note: Any requisition accompanying the specimen must have the same primary and secondary identifier and include the date and time of collection.

Notification of unacceptable specimens will be made by the Laboratory to the client. Documentation of specimen rejection will be included in the patient report.

### Inappropriate Submissions

All specimens must be collected, labeled, transported and processed according to procedure. Review the appropriate container type, volume and special handling requirements needed for analysis before the specimen is collected. If any of the guidelines for these processes are not met, the specimen may be rejected or the test may be canceled. The following list represents some possible causes for specimen rejection or test cancellation:

- Inappropriate specimen type
- Insufficient volume for analysis
- Improperly labeled specimen
- Inappropriate specimen container
- Improper specimen transport
- Specimen has leaked in transit
- Specimen has been submitted in incorrect or expired transport media
- Incomplete or incorrect test request form (e.g., no tests marked)
- Test order without a specimen
- Specimen without a test order
- No specimen type provided
- No source provided\*
- Compromised specimen (e.g., hemolyzed, lipemic or clotted specimens)

\*The source of specimen, when appropriate, must be included on the paper or electronic request form. The source of specimen is **required** for all infectious disease testing, including PCR tests.