

# SPECIMEN LABELING REQUIREMENTS

**All specimens submitted to the laboratory must be individually labeled.**

Specimen labels may be ordered from Laboratory Services – please call Client Services.

**Each Container MUST be labeled with the following information:**



**Patient's full legal name (as it appears on the requisition)**  
**Second identifier unique to the patient (date of birth, SSN, billing #, etc.)**



**Date and time of collection**  
**Initials, ID# or signature of person collecting the specimen**



**Collection source/site as required for microbiology, molecular pathology, pathology, cytology and electron microscopy**



**Multiple specimens submitted for one patient MUST be labeled with an alpha/numeric description which is an exact match to the requisition**

## Example:

**Name:** Doe, John Michael  
**Second Identifier:** (SS, DOB, MRN, FIN/Billing Number, etc.)  
**Date:** 09/04/01      **Time:** 9:00 am      **Initials:** HR  
**Source/Site:** Right Upper Chest, (A or 1, B or 2)

## Use indelible ink:

- Print clearly
- Label containers – DO NOT put labels on caps or lids
- Container labeling MUST match information on requisition
- Label frosted end of slides with a No. 2 pencil
- Slides must be labeled with patient's name and date of birth. If possible, indicate if the slide is fixed or air-dried.

# TRANSPORTING SPECIMENS

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## **Basic methods for transporting specimens:**

- Transport specimens in labeled, appropriate containers (sterile, leak-proof, without needles, swabs in culettes, strep screens acceptable in paper sleeves).
- Place the labeled specimen container in the sealable pouch of the biohazard transport bag. Seal the pouch securely.
- Place the completed requisition in the unsealed outer pouch of the biohazard transport bag containing the specimen.
- Place the sealed bag containing the specimen and the requisition inside a second bag. Seal it securely.
- Determine the correct temperature for transport as listed under test requirements. Mark the bag appropriately.

**Specimens should not be shipped in syringes** as syringes with needles attached are dangerous to anyone handling them. **Some Microbiology specimens are acceptable in capped syringes.** Transfer the contents of the syringe into an appropriate container. If a syringe is shipped with the needle attached, the ordering clinician or office will be contacted.

Failure to provide the appropriate conditions can render a specimen unsuitable for testing. **If the specimen integrity will be compromised by the weather, either too hot or too cold, call a courier to transport the specimens immediately to the laboratory. For assistance, contact your providing laboratory.**

## **Frozen: -10°C or colder (<14°F)**

When ordering multiple tests on a patient, prepare a separate aliquot for each test requiring a frozen specimen. Pour off serum or plasma into a properly labeled plastic tube before freezing. Do not freeze glass tubes. Do not freeze whole blood unless specifically indicated by the specimen requirements. Do not package frozen specimens with non-frozen specimens. Specimens must remain frozen during shipment.

## **Refrigerated: 2-8°C (35.6-46.4°F)**

Specimens should be packaged in an appropriate shipping container with a frozen coolant pack. Insulate the specimen by placing a barrier (i.e., paper towels) to ensure that it does not come in direct contact with the coolant pack. One pack cools for 8-10 hours; 2 packs cool for 24 hours if the shipping container remains unopened.

## **Room temperature (Ambient): 18-25°C (64.4-77°F)**

Room temperature specimens need not be packaged with coolants; however, extreme weather or other conditions such as exposure to sunlight could affect specimen quality. Take weather and other conditions into consideration when leaving specimens in locked boxes for couriers.