THE University of Vermont HEALTH NETWORK
Porter Medical Center

Porter Medical Center Laboratory
115 Porter Drive
Middlebury, VT 05753

SPECIMEN LABELING

Laboratory personnel cannot accept improperly labeled specimens. To do so would directly jeopardize the HEALTH and SAFETY of the patient.

1) **Specimen containers sent to the laboratory must be labeled as follows:**
   - **a)** **Patient's First and Last Name**
   - **b)** **Patient's Date of Birth**
   - **c)** Collection Date & Time
   - **d)** Additional information required for Pre-Transfusion specimens. See Typenex Procedure.

2) Blood Tubes
   - **a)** Place any label flat on blood tubes. Do not wing the label. 3) Specimens in Plastic Containers:

a) Place the label on the container, NOT ON THE LID.

4) Culture Swabs in Transport containers:
   a) Place the label flat on the plastic transport sheath (Do not wing). Labeling the outside envelope is not acceptable.

5) Surgical Pathology:
   a) Specimen containers must have their lids firmly and securely in place and the container must not be leaking. Label the container, not the lid.
   b) Glass slides must be labeled in pencil on the frosted end with the last name and first initial and placed in a slide transport container labeled with last name, first name and date of birth.

Correcting Specimen Information

The laboratory will accept samples in certain cases if the individual who collected the samples assumes responsibility, comes to the laboratory, and signs a waiver of liability. These specimens will be stabilized and held until required information is obtained or a specimen is tested and results held. Results will not be released until information is obtained.

1) Clarification is required for the following scenarios: MAY DELAY TESTING

a) Questionable source
b) Discrepancies in specimen identification between the requisition and specimen label.
c) Lack of clarity in requisition order for specimen submitted.
d) Minor name discrepancies.
e) Clarification of the patient name may also be required when the specimen container contains a nick name, first initial or minor spelling error (unless the second identifier on the specimen container is an exact match to the second identifier on the requisition).

2) Re-verification of Specimens: MAY DELAY TESTING

a) The laboratory will notify the client and explain the problem, and ask what, if any testing should be performed.
b) If the sample originated on the Porter campus and there is a request that the testing be completed, the individual who collected the specimen MUST sign a waiver of liability.
   i) Only the ordering physician can authorize an unlabeled irreplaceable specimen to be tested.
c) If the sample originated outside the Porter campus and there is a request that the testing be completed, then a phone call will be placed to the client and the waiver of liability can be completed over the phone.

d) Laboratory personnel must also sign the waiver of liability, stating the event will be documented in the patient's record. A comment explaining the circumstances and exception to the policy will be documented in sample comment area of sample(s) involved.

e) The Laboratory will tabulate by location code and file. Monthly, the tabulated results will be given to individual clients for review.

f) If there are any questions or concerns about the acceptability of a specimen, contact a laboratory supervisor or pathologist for assistance.

SPECIMEN COLLECTION

The laboratory phlebotomy staff is available to collect blood samples for laboratory testing. Information is provided here to assist you in your collection of specimens.

Important Notes:

- Patient Identification: At least 2 identifiers must be used to identify the patient and two that must be used are name and date of birth. The person who collects the specimen will properly identify patient by asking the patient to state their ***name and date of birth*** and label all specimens at the time of collection and in the presence of the patient. All information must be matched with identifying labels and with requisition information.
- **For in-house patients**, the specimen must be labeled at the bedside and patient information must also be verified by checking the patient's wristband.
- **Requisitions** must be properly completed and include the patient demographic data, tests to be performed, and special processing information, pertinent clinical information and the requesting physician name. Blood Bank requisitions for Type & Screen/Crossmatch specimens require the collector's signature.
  - If Blood Bank specimen see Typenex Procedure Blood Bank section for specific collection procedures.

SPECIMEN COLLECTION CONTAINERS

Always store supplies as directed on container/box. Do not use beyond the expiration date.

Blood Tube Types:

- **Blue Top** - Light blue top, contains 3.2 % Sodium Citrate (Must fill this tube completely.)
- **Lavender Top** - Contains K3 liquid EDTA
- **Green Top** - Contains Lithium Heparin
- **Gray Top** - Contains Sodium Fluoride/Potassium Oxalate
- **Pink Top [EDTA]** - Used for Blood Banking that is collected by laboratory personnel.
- **Red Top** - Contains no additives
- **Red with Yellow Top** - Contains a gel barrier to separate serum from red cells.
  - Sample should be spun within 1 hour of collection.
- **Special Heparin Tube** - Special tube prepared by FAHC
- **Trace Element Kits** – Royal Blue Tubes – Lavender Serum and Whole Blood Kits
  - Kits provided by Mayo Medical Laboratory

- **Yellow Top** - ACD tube
- **Other specialized tubes**

Other Collection Containers:

- **Sterile Containers for cultures**: Plastic clean container with leak resistant top
- **24-hr urine jugs**: With or without preservative
- **CSF fluid:** Tubes on lumbar puncture tray
- **Cytology specimens**: Cytolyt, frosted end slides (fixed or in alcohol) **Pathology samples**: Formalin containers available in multiple sizes.
- **Newborn Screening Card**: For collection of Newborn screening tests via heel prick.

LABORATORY SPECIMEN ACCEPTABILITY POLICY

Specimens accepted in Pathology and Laboratory Medicine for testing must be properly identified and satisfactory for analysis.

Specimen Identification

1) **The person who collected the specimen must label all specimens at the time of collection. The specimen label must have a minimum of the patient's full name (last, first) and date of birth.**
2) Specimens for HLA (tissue typing) must also include the date of collection.
3) Specimens for Blood Bank that will be used for crossmatching must also include the patient's date of birth, date of collection and the signature or initials of the person collecting the blood sample and must be collected using Typenex procedure.
4) Specimens for Prenatal, Blood Types, or Antibody Screens must be collected by the laboratory staff.
5) All specimens must be accompanied by a matching, properly labeled and completed requisition. 6) Glass slides must be labeled with at least the patient's last name.

7) Labels must be on the container, not the lid.

Specimen Integrity

Under the following conditions, a specimen is not satisfactory for testing purposes:

- Blood clotted for whole blood or plasma tests
- Gross hemolysis
- Gross contamination or damage
- Incorrect tube/container used
- Incorrect preservative used
- Incorrect anticoagulant used
- Time limit exceeded for stability of test

Under the following conditions, a specimen may not be satisfactory for testing purposes:

- Inadequate volume - contact the provider to request more specimens or prioritize if only a portion of the testing can be done.
- Wrong storage/transport

TRANSPORT OF HAZARDOUS SPECIMENS

All specimens are considered an infectious hazard and must be placed in a labeled leak proof container (screw-capped plastic specimen jar, vacuum tube or other suitable container) and then sealed in a clear protective plastic bag which is clearly labeled as to the hazard present. Biohazard bags should be used for transport of ALL specimens to the laboratory.