

## **GENERAL SPECIMEN COLLECTION AND HANDLING**

Quality of testing begins with specimen collection. Therefore, it is important to adhere to the following collection and handling guidelines when preparing the sample for testing.

### **Serum**

Draw blood in a red top (RTT) vacuum tube. Allow the tube to fill completely. Invert the tube once to accelerate the clotting. Allow the blood to clot for 30 minutes. Centrifuge for 5-10 minutes at 2000-2800 rpm. Transfer the serum into a plastic vial. Hemolyzed, icteric or lipemic specimens will invalidate certain tests. Upon receipt of such specimens we may request a new sample to assure results of diagnostic value. Serum separator or gel tubes are processed in the above manner. Do not use serum separator or gel tubes for drug levels.

### **Plasma**

Draw blood in specified (blue, green (GTT), lavender (LTT)) top vacuum tube. After the tube has been filled with blood, it should be inverted at least 5-6 times in order to facilitate mixing and prevent coagulation. Centrifuge 5-10 minutes at 2000-2800 rpm. Transfer the plasma into a plastic transport vial. Label clearly as "PLASMA."

### **Whole Blood**

Draw blood in specified (blue, green, lavender, red) top vacuum tube. The blue top contains citrate, the green top (GTT) contains heparin, the lavender top (LTT) tube contains EDTA, the yellow top vacuum tube contains sodium polyanethosulfonate (SPS) and the red top (RTT) contains no anticoagulant. After the tube has been filled, invert at least 5-6 times to facilitate mixing and prevent coagulation in tubes containing anticoagulant. Submit entire tube. For whole blood specimens requiring a red top tube, do not use serum separator or gel tubes.

### **Slides**

Blood smears should be labeled with patient's full name and date using a pencil. Do not use ballpoint ink or labels/stickers to identify slides. Allow slides to dry on a flat surface. Store at room temperature in a plastic or cardboard holder. Do not refrigerate slides.

### **Urines**

Twenty-four hour urines may be returned in the original collection container without aliquoting. Aliquots or random urines should be submitted in Sage containers that are supplied by our Laboratory. Caps should be securely tightened to prevent leakage. Container should be labeled using the sticker attached to the requisition.

### **Aerobic (bacterial)**

Container or Transport Device: Sterile, screw-capped tube or container. Do not send semi-solid transport medium.

### **Labeling**

Request forms and specimens must be identically labeled with patient's full name (last, first) printed on each. Control number on the form must match control number on the specimen label. Specimen may be rejected due to improper labeling. If plasma and serum are required on a patient, designate specimen type on tube.

### **Temperature**

Each specimen must be stored and transported at the temperature listed under the specific tests. Indicate special temperature requirements to the courier.

When ordering more than one test requiring a frozen specimen, separate aliquots should be submitted for each test.