

Labeling of Specimen for Laboratory Testing

Proper Labeling of Specimen for Laboratory Testing

Before and after collecting any laboratory specimens, identification of patient must be confirmed by comparing patient's entire name and medical record number on patient's armband with patient's entire name and medical record number on patient's computerized label. For nursery patients, a handwritten armband is prepared and attached to infant at birth.

Following proper collection of laboratory specimen, specimen must be labeled with patient's computerized label, initialed by person collecting specimen, and have the time of collection. Specimen should always be labeled at bedside immediately following collection. Apply label lengthwise so that laboratory label can be affixed properly. Send properly labeled specimen to laboratory as soon as possible.

Errors in proper collection, labeling, and/or storage will necessitate recollection of specimen which causes delay in results and inconvenience for all. Refer any questions to supervisor on duty, supervisor on call, laboratory manager, or a pathologist.

Labeling of Multiple Specimens from Same Site

The following instructions should be followed for multiple specimens, such as biopsies, body fluids, etc, which are frequently collected in multiple containers and which need to be distributed to several laboratory departments:

- Specimen container should be properly labeled with patient's computerized label and date and time of collection.
- Written on this label **must** be instructions for testing this specimen, ie, "For Cytology," "For Culture," "For Cell Count," etc. Spinal fluid is collected in pre-numbered tube and, unless otherwise indicated, laboratory has a predetermined distribution procedure.

Proper Identification and Handling of Cord Blood Specimen

Labor and Delivery Personnel

Follow this procedure:

- Place a mother's computer label lengthwise on each tube of cord blood collected
- Write "Cord Blood" on label
- After baby is admitted to the hospital, request appropriate test using date and time of birth as collection date and time
- Affix a baby's computer label adjacent to mother's label on each tube. Do not obscure any part of either label.
- Send properly labeled specimen to Laboratory. Specimen can remain at room temperature for 2 hours.