

Specimen Labeling Requirements

EMRL must adhere to proper identification of patient specimens, for both quality and safety reasons. Proper identification standards are specified by the College of American Pathologists (CAP) GEN 40700. “Specimens lacking proper identification or an accompanying requisition should not be accepted by the laboratory.” To be compliant, it is important that each specimen be properly labeled with the same demographics that appear on the paperwork. If a discrepancy has been identified upon specimen arrival, we will contact you.

To maintain patient safety standards, specimens must be properly labeled with the name of the patient, a numerical identifier that is unique to the patient (like DOB or SSN), collection date, and the source of the specimen, where applicable. Discrepancies between patient identifiers on the requisition and the specimen may lead to the rejection of a specimen.

Special Labeling Requirements for Blood Bank / Including Specimens for Prenatal Testing

Specimens submitted for blood bank testing shall be positively identified at the time of collection. The label shall contain sufficient information for unique identification of the patient, the date of sample collection and a mechanism to identify the individual who collected the blood. Testing can not be performed unless ALL of the following information is recorded on the blood sample label.

- PATIENT’S FULL NAME
- UNIQUE SECOND IDENTIFIER, I.E. SSN, MEDICAL RECORD NUMBER, DATE OF BIRTH, ETC.
- DATE OF SAMPLE COLLECTION
- INITIALS OF PERSON WHO COLLECTED THE SPECIMEN

Specimen Rejection

Accurate laboratory test results depend on the quality of the specimen submitted. The most common causes of laboratory error occur in the pre-analytical (before actual testing) phase. Strict adherence to specimen requirements, labeling and proper collection technique is important. Always check patient preparation instructions and specimen collection requirements before scheduling a patient for specimen collection. If there is any doubt or question regarding specimen collection, please contact Client Services to clarify the order and specimen requirements.

To avoid specimen rejection, please refer to the following checklist to make sure the specimen condition is correct:

- Full 24 hours and if needed appropriate preservative for timed urine collections
- Patient understood collection instructions and followed them
- Blood specimens are not hemolyzed or lipemic
- Patient information requested is supplied
- Patient/specimen properly identified
- Specimen will reach laboratory within test stability time limits
- Appropriate Specimen container was used (metal-free, separation gel, sterile, etc.) or Transport media
- Appropriate Specimen type (plasma, serum, whole blood, etc.)
- Appropriate Specimen volume
- Appropriate storage and transport temperature (ambient, frozen, refrigerated)

Rules for Labeling Specimens

LABELING Do's 😊	LABELING Don'ts ☹️
1. Before collection, confirm the identification of a conscious patient by asking them to give their full name and date of birth. Compare this information with the requisition form.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Name alone is not enough to correctly identify the patient. ● Don't assume that the patients' paperwork is correct.
2. Label the specimen container <i>after</i> performing collection, but <i>before</i> leaving the side of the patient.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do not move the specimen to a different location for labeling. ● Do not leave the specimen for someone else to label. ● Do not pre-label specimen containers before collection.
3. All specimens and requisitions must be labeled with: PATIENT'S FIRST AND LAST NAME SPECIMEN TYPE (SERUM, PLASMA, URINE, BODY FLUID, ETC.) SPECIMEN SOURCE (FOR CULTURES) INITIALS (PERSON WHO COLLECTED THE SPECIMEN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Don't guess or take shortcuts! ● Don't assume that specimen type or source is obvious. ● Discrepancies between a patient name on the requisition and specimen may lead to the rejection of a specimen.
4. Make sure that the container lids and labels are securely fastened.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Leaking or unlabeled specimens will be rejected.
5. For non-blood specimens, affix the label to the container (not the lid).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do not use a container <i>LID</i> for labeling.