
PROPER SPECIMEN LABELING

LABELING

All specimens arriving in the laboratory must be properly labeled to support Patient Safety. Two unique identifiers for the patient must be on the specimen. The first and last name of the patient is mandatory. Either a date of birth or the medical record number is acceptable as the second identifier. The patient's social security is not necessary. The date and time of collection, as well as the ID of the collector should be noted if not captured electronically.

The labeling information must be confirmed with the patient when ever possible before labeling the specimen by asking the patient to recite the spelling of their name and date of birth. If the patient is unable to confirm by spelling the name etc, the name of a care giver that provides confirmation of the identity of the patient should be listed. Any discrepancies must be reconciled.

Information presented on the order request and specimen labels must be in agreement. Additionally, this information should be concurrent to the information present on the patient identification band.

GUIDELINES FOR LABELING:

- Immediately after collection, legibly label the specimen in the presence of the patient.
- For positive patient identification ask the patient to spell their first and last name along with reciting their date of birth. Compare with the preprinted label if available. If no label is available, hand label the tube with the patient's full name, date of birth, date and time of collection, and the code/initials of the collector. This information along with the patient's demographics should also appear on the requisition.

Patient Identification Label For Specimens

NAME	
DOB	Phleb Initials
Date	Time

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Labels whether electronically or manually generated should be:

- Placed vertically over the tube’s paper label with the name seated near the cap of the tube.
- Placed on straight, not wrapped around the tube or tube bottom, or overlapping the tube cap
- Free of wrinkles and tears
- Free of stray marks in the bar-coded area
- Placed on the tube in single thickness (only a single label placed on the tube)

SPECIMEN REJECTION DUE TO LABELING ERROR

The laboratory strives for 100% compliance when it comes to specimen labeling and Patient Safety. Specimens are considered mislabeled when there is a mismatch between patient specific identifiers and information accompanying the specimen. When insufficient, inconsistent, or inaccurate identification exists, the laboratory will recommend that a new specimen be obtained if feasible, based on the outline of the following charts (Retrievable Specimens, Irretrievable or Precious Specimens).

LABELING GUIDELINES: It is expected that lab specimens will be labeled at the point of collection in the presence of the patient. The labels are required to have 2 unique patient identifiers, Date and Time of collection and the collectors ID. Immediate notification to the provider is imperative for all discrepancies.

RETRIEVABLE SPECIMENS

For Retrievable Samples to include but not limited to: urines, blood collections, Stool, Semen, Swabs, (except those obtained in the OR). Blood Bank specimens must match exactly and have all of the labeling criteria or they will be rejected.

** For specimens mailed to the laboratory by the patient, such as fecal occult blood cards, the second identifier can be the address and phone number of the patient as the card template displays. The requisition information accompanying the stool cards should match the name, address and phone number as written on the stool card.*

Type of Labeling Error	QM Form/ Discard Form/ Precious Spec Form as appropriate	Specimen held/ Processed off line until clarification	Pathologist Consult	Rejected
Unlabeled specimen	Y	N	N	Y
Last name only, no DOB or MR#	Y	N	N	Y

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First name only with or without DOB or MR#	Y	N	N	Y
Last name, first initial No DOB or MR#	Y	N	N	Y
Last name, First Initial, DOB or MR#	Y	N	N	Y
Last name, nickname DOB or MR#	Y	Y	Y	To be determined
Last name change due to marital status. Must have documentation from the patient that the name has changed as of a date. Info must be captured as a chartable comment in soft.	Y	Y	N	Y if not confirmed. NO If info is confirmed by the patient.
Lack of JR. SR.	N	N	N	N
Full name, No DOB or MR#	Y	Y	Y	To be determined
Specimen label does not match the name on the requisition	Y	N	N	Y
The secondary label does not match the primary label	Y	N	N	Y
Name is misspelled	Y	Y	Y	To be determined

IRRETRIEVABLE SPECIMENS

To include but not limited to Body Fluids other than urine, Pathology Specimens, Pap Smears, Deep wound cultures collected in the OR.

Type of Labeling Error	QM Form/ Discard Form/ Precious Spec Form as appropriate	Specimen held/ Processed off line until clarification	Pathologist Consult	Rejected
Unlabeled specimen	Y	Y	Y	To be Determined
Last name only, no DOB or MR#	Y	Y	Y	To be Determined
First name only with or without DOB or MR#	Y	Y	Y	To be Determined
Last name, first initial No DOB or MR#	Y	Y	Y	To be Determined
Last name, First Initial, DOB or MR#	Y	Y	Y	To be Determined
Last name, nickname DOB or MR#	Y	Y	Y	To be Determined

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Last name change due to marital status	Y	Y	Y	To be Determined
Lack of JR. SR.	N	N	N	N
Full name, No DOB or MR#	Y	Y	Y	To be determined
Specimen label does not match the name on the requisition	Y	Y	Y	To be Determined
The secondary label does not match the primary label	Y	Y	Y	To be Determined
Name is miss spelled	Y	Y	Y	To be Determined

- ✓ Decisions to discard the precious specimens will be made by the pathologist.
- ✓ Consult the pathologist "On Call".
- ✓ For third shift, preserve the specimen until a pathologist can be reached in the early AM.
- ✓ Any documentation to accept the specimen for testing must be obtained in writing. This documentation must be signed off by the physician who procured the specimen (Precious Specimen Form completed)
- ✓ ***All discrepancies must be documented as a chartable comment in SCC order entry by a laboratory supervisor or manager.***

The laboratory strives for 100% compliance when it comes to specimen labeling and Patient Safety.

Authorized by Weldon Sanford MD Laboratory Medical Director _____
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