
SPECIMEN PROCESSING

To maintain the integrity of blood specimens, clotted samples should be centrifuged within two hours of collection but not before they have been allowed to properly clot, approximately 30 minutes.

To operate the centrifuge, balance the samples (a water balance tube of identical size and fill may be necessary). The separator tubes and red top tubes should be spun for 15 minutes at approximately 3000 rpms. The cycle of the centrifuge should not be interrupted once it is operational. Allow the centrifuge to come to a complete stop before opening the lid. Respinning separator tubes may cause tainted testing results. CMC will supply and maintain the fixed angle centrifuges for the processing of specimens that will be tested at CMC.

Inpatient blood specimens may be sent to the lab as soon as they are collected and labeled. The laboratory will take responsibility for processing the specimens using the automated processor. The instrument (Tecan) will electronically receive the specimen in the lab computer system, centrifuge, aliquot, and sort the specimens eliminating the risk of mislabeling the prodigy specimens.

Specimens collected in the outpatient locations or during down time may have to be separated after centrifuging to maintain the integrity of the testing sample. Red top tubes should never be sent without centrifuging and separating the specimen. Separating is accomplished by aspirating/removing the Serum/Plasma (liquid) component of the centrifuged specimen with a plastic disposable dropper and placing the contents of the dropper in a clean well-labeled transport tube with a secure cap. Avoid aspiration of the specimen close to the cell layer. Place the specimen at the appropriate storage temperature.

Usually when freezing specimens, the serum/plasma is the component that is frozen and the cells remain at refrigerated or room temperature and may even be immediately discarded. Specimens with limited stability should be processed, separated and stored as required. Specimens that are collected on ice should be chilled throughout the preparation process and stored frozen as soon as possible. Specimens that are frozen should not be allowed go through a freeze-thaw-freeze cycle.

Specimen such as urine should be kept refrigerated after collection to maintain the integrity of the specimen.

Please note; Metal testing requires special processing and transport equipment. See specific Metal Free Processing Procedure or call Customer support (663-8031) for assistance.