
SPECIMEN PACKAGING

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All diagnostic specimens submitted to the lab will be packaged in at least a primary and a secondary container. This precaution is to prevent the accidental exposure of potentially infectious samples to the staff and the public. The primary container is the vessel that contains the actual specimen, the collection tube, bottle, or jar etc. The secondary container is the packaging the primary container is placed in. Most often specimen tubes are placed in small zip lock plastic bags. Larger specimens may be placed in large plastic bags or hard walled plastic containers.

There are two sections to the plastic specimen transport bags used as secondary containers. The larger pouch is meant for the specimens and thinner pouch is used for the transport of the paper requisitions. Specimens and paperwork should be packaged separately in the same bag to prevent contamination in the event of a spill.

All lids to specimen jars, cups, jugs and the like are secured and tightened to prevent leakage. The leakage may render the specimen unable to be tested. All specimens that have been collected with a needle and syringe must have the needle removed and replaced with a stopper to prevent leakage.

Light sensitive samples must be packaged to prevent the specimen's exposure to any light source. This can be accomplished by wrapping the primary container with aluminum foil.

Lab specimens are often susceptible to variations in temperature. Packaging specimens to maintain the optimum temperature specific to the testing is critical to the accuracy of the results.

Packaging for the specimen to travel in the pneumatic tube system requires additional attention. Along with the primary and secondary containers additional padding is required in the transport carrier. Please note the complete procedure is located on the CMC Intranet / Administrative Manual/Computerized Tube System.

Single specimens may be placed in a zip lock bag and the requisition may be placed in the attached pocket of the bag. Multiple blood specimens are preferably "racked" as opposed to individual specimen bags. This saves time, cuts back biohazard waste, and lessens the ergonomic impact of zipping and unzipping multiple specimen bags. Specimens should stay in the upright position.

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Inpatient sweep collection may be racked in the following manner, then placed in the black transport bag for delivery to the lab.

To Rack Specimens

Place specimens by patient in the slots of the rack, running the length of the rack. Place multiple tubes of each patient behind the original tube.

Patient Rack

	●										
●	●										
11	12										
●				●					●		
●		●	●	●		●		●	●		●
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9			

● = Blue top tube ● = Gold top separator tube ● = lavender tube ● = urine collection tube

OUTPATIENT PACKAGING

Completed requisitions are placed upside down in the order in which the specimens have been collected. The rack is then placed in a large zip lock bag for transport. All additional completed forms necessary to process the specimens, especially those specimens that will be forwarded to another testing facility, should be attached to the original requisition. Incomplete or missing forms could delay the turnaround time for resulting. These specimens are refrigerated until ready for pick up unless otherwise stated in the specific test requirements.

Beware! Exposing specimens to extreme weather conditions will compromise the integrity of the testing specimens. If placing specimens in a pick-up box for the courier, the box must be locked to insure the privacy of the patients and the security of the samples.

Cold packs should be added to the pick up boxes in extreme heat and bottles of hot water may be placed in the box in extreme cold. It is best to place the box in the foyer of the building to protect it from the extreme temperatures. Non blood specimens such as swabs and urine tubes can be placed in the rack as well. Any collection vessel that is not accommodated by the rack may be individually bagged and placed in the large zip bag for transport.