

CONSIDERATIONS:

1. Lab specimen results such as blood, urine, etc., are only as accurate as the attention that is giving before and after the specimen is obtained by:
 - a. Correctly labeling and completing the requisition
 - b. Assuring the specimen is prepared and transported correctly
2. Lab policies frequently require that lab specimens be disposed, without performing the tests, in the following circumstances:
 - a. The wrong tube or container was used for the test
 - b. The label on specimen cannot be read (e.g., label contaminated during specimen collection) or is missing crucial information (e.g. a second patient identifier)
 - c. Specimen size is inadequate to run appropriate test
 - d. Requisition is incomplete or has become contaminated
 - e. Requisition becomes separated from its specimen
 - f. Specimen arrives at an unacceptable temperature or unacceptable time from time drawn
3. The following procedure identifies guidelines commonly practiced by most clinical laboratories for preparing and transporting specimens. The best procedure, however is to call ahead of time to verify:
 - a. Appropriate tube/container for ordered test
 - b. Acceptable time limit from draw to lab
 - c. Temperature at which the specimen must be maintained for transport
 - d. Some labs require a signed MD/NP order for the lab test being collected. Orders may come from MD office or faxed by HHF from scanned documents.
- ii. Temperature for transport
- iii. Time limit on delivering specimen to lab
- c. Collect correct tubes/containers, labels and requisition forms
2. To assure appropriate labeling of specimen:
 - a. Complete labels with:
 - i. Patient's name, first and last
 - ii. Second identifier: Many agencies use Date of Birth (DOB)
 - iii. Leave space for adding date/time obtained
 - iv. Your initials
 - b. Labels may be placed on the container before or in the home after specimen collection. If the outside of the container is likely to be contaminated by collection process, put on afterward
3. To assure appropriate completion of requisition:
 - a. Obtain particular laboratory's requisition forms
 - b. Follow directions on requisition form
 - c. Essential items for a lab requisition form are:
 - i. Patient Name
 - ii. DOB
 - iii. Ordering Physician and IV company if appropriate
 - iv. Who to contact with results and contact number
 - v. Insurance information
 - vi. Diagnosis
 - vii. Ordered test(s)
 - viii. Date, time, and name of clinician obtaining the specimen
4. To protect lab staff from exposure to pathogens:
 - a. Use Standard Precautions when obtaining specimens
 - b. Assure all specimen lids are securely in place
 - c. If the outside of any specimen or container becomes contaminated with bodily fluids, clean outside of tubes/containers. Consider using a soapy disposable washcloth followed by a disinfectant wipe before placing in specimen bag

EQUIPMENT:

Requisition forms, individualized by lab
Patient labels, for tubes/containers
Sterile containers, some labs require transferring specimens to "clean" containers
Pen
Lab specimen
Biohazard specimen bags with requisition pocket
Biohazard specimen transportation container
Gloves

PROCEDURE:

1. To assure correct specimen preparation:
 - a. Reference the resources at agency (including lab information book and posted information in supply area).
 - b. Call lab if necessary to verify:
 - i. Correct tube/container
5. To transport specimens from patient's home to lab:
 - a. Place specimen in a lab specimen bag, which has a separate pocket for the requisition, and is marked "biohazard"
 - b. Place the specimen bag in an impervious, leak-proof container, marked "biohazard." Suitable containers include a cooler or plastic padded transport bag
6. To protect specimen from deterioration between obtaining it and the lab processing it:
 - a. Determine the temperature at which the specimen needs to be maintained
 - b. Determine the time in which it needs to be processed by lab after obtaining the specimen

- c. Pack specimens with an adequate amount of ice packs and insulation to keep specimens at required temperature
- 7. To assure timely delivery to the laboratory:
 - a. Discuss with supervisor how to get the specimen to lab. Options include:
 - i. Drop the specimen at the lab yourself
 - ii. Ask caregiver to deliver the specimen
 - iii. Determine schedule for a “drop box” pick-up

AFTER CARE:

- 1. Document in patient record:
 - a. Type of specimen obtained, e.g., blood, urine
 - b. How sample was obtained, e.g., by venipuncture, “clean catch”
 - c. Lab tests ordered for specimen
 - d. Name of lab
 - e. Time dropped-off at lab
 - f. Any instructions given to patient/caregiver
 - g. Any communication with physician
- 2. Communicate with physician about inability to obtain specimen and alternate plans, if needed.
- 3. Follow-up next day (or as per specimen’s time requirements) with physician or lab for results.

REFERENCE:

American Biological Safety Association (n.d.). Retrieved on June 1, 2012 from <http://www.absa.org/pdf/OSHAPrincOfBS.pdf>

CDC (n.d.). Specimen Collection Guidelines. Retrieved on June 1, 2012 from <http://emergency.cdc.gov/urdo/pdf/SpecCollectionGuidelines.pdf>

Adopted VNAA; Approved Policy Committee 05/14