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Clinical Laboratory Update

Specimen Requirements

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Specimen collection, preparation, and handling are essential steps in obtaining accurate test results. Proper procedures must be followed to assure the integrity of the specimen and its safe and expedient delivery to the laboratory as well as its processing once in the laboratory.

Each test has specific requirements for specimen collection. Be sure to review the specimen requirements for the requested test. Careful attention to the specific requirements for each test specimen can help to avoid the following general specimen collection errors:

- Insufficient quantity
- Hemolysis
- Failure to use the correct container for specimen collection
- Failure to label a specimen correctly and to provide all pertinent information
- Failure to tighten specimen container lids, resulting in leakage and/or contamination of specimen

Insufficient Quantity of Specimen

One of the most common and expensive errors in specimen collection is the submission of an insufficient sample for testing. Because of an insufficient sample, our laboratory has to send out a report marked QNS (Quantity Not Sufficient) and the patient has to be called back for a repeat collection. To ensure an adequate amount of specimen, be sure to:

- Always draw whole blood in an amount 2.5 times the volume of serum or plasma required for a particular test (e.g., if 4 ml serum are required, draw at least 10 ml whole blood)
- Stated minimum volumes are absolute minimums which do not allow for retesting

Specifically for the BNP test, a separate lavender tube is required, and for the HIV 1/2 test, a separate SST tube is required to ensure proper testing of these specimens.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact our Client Service Department at 718-232-1515, Ext 1.

Once again, we thank you in advance for your assistance in this matter.

Regards,

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