



METHODIST HOSPITAL PATHOLOGY NEWSLETTER



BLOOD BANK CHANGES

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We are changing the test tube requirements for some of the tests done in blood bank to be more in line with current practices. Effective February 19, 2007 we will begin using a pink top tube (K₃ EDTA) for the following tests:

- Prenatal Panel*
- ABO & Rh
- Antibody screen/ID/Titer
- Direct Coombs
- Crossmatch
- Rh Immune Globulin Workup

The blood bank is requesting that this list of test specimens be submitted in **PINK TOP TUBES**. In the event that additional sample is needed for further testing the Blood Bank will notify your laboratory.

*The Prenatal Panel will include an SST tube, lavender top tube and pink top tube.

The Blood Bank would like to remind you of the labeling requirements set by the FDA and AABB;

- Last name, first name and middle initial (if applicable). The name on the tube **MUST** match the name on the requisition or on the computer print-out and bar code labels.
- The Medical Record Number or other unique identifier. **Do not use Social Security Number.**
- Date and time of collection and the initials of the person collecting the sample.

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ePathLink

ePathLink is The Pathology Center's web-based ordering and reporting module through Cerner Millennium. Clinicians and staff can access ePathLink via standard desktop browsers over public or private networks.

The laboratory test order entry screens can be customized for your facility. Patient test results can be viewed and printed at any time from any PC with an internet

connection.

ePathLink can streamline your registration and ordering by capturing all required patient and payer information at the time of registration. This will allow you to positively ID your specimens from order to testing utilizing a bar code label generated on site.

Patient information that is billed to a third party can be entered once (or could already be in our system from previous encounters). There is no need

to send a copy of the insurance card each time you send lab tests.

A complete ICD-9 table is available and an ABN will print for Medicare patients if the necessary criteria is met. This can mean fewer phone calls from us for incomplete or missing diagnosis information.

We are currently exploring electronic medical record (EMR) software that will allow us to transfer patient test results into your Practice Management System or Laboratory Information System. This will allow your facility to have a complete patient medical record in one system.



UPDATE ON TRANSPORT TUBES

BD has provided data on the effects of freezing serum or plasma in their gel separator tubes (SST and PST) for 25 chemistry analytes. According to this data, SST tubes were associated with medically significant decreases in sodium, chloride, triglycerides, estradiol and testosterone results; while PST tubes were associated with medically significant increases in potassium, AST, triglycerides, and LD results.

Greiner (the tubes supplied through The Pathology Center) has indicated that their SST and PST tubes can fail at temperatures lower than -60°C . Tests that require freezing are shipped to ARUP Laboratories on dry ice at -78°C , which could result in tube failure.

We have standard aliquot transport tubes supplied by ARUP for frozen or critically frozen specimens. Please request these transport tubes through our Outreach supply office at 402-354-8729.

Remember, if several frozen or critically frozen specimens are being sent from the same sample each test should be aliquoted into a separate transport tube.



TRACE ELEMENT-FREE TRANSPORT TUBES

ARUP is now providing transport tubes to minimize the risk of external elemental contamination that may lead to falsely elevated trace element results.

Royal blue-top blood collection tubes are available with or without anticoagulant and certified trace element-free for most clinically important elements. When blood is drawn according to procedure and transferred into the trace element-free transport tubes there is less chance of contamination for external elements.

Trace elements are a part of everyday life, however, there are individuals at high risk for exposure to toxic elements. Laboratory testing can identify and monitor decontamination efforts.

Many plastic transport tubes contain elements such as zinc, aluminum, chromium and lead. The most frequent and clinically significant elemental contamination is with aluminum, a common component of anticoagulant preservatives, serum separator gels, plastics, and rubber stoppers used in manufacturing blood collection tubes.

The Pathology Center will send a Trace Element-free transport tube with each request for the royal blue-top blood collection tube.

To prevent contamination of the transport tube, the lids of the tubes should not be removed until the tube is used. The lid should be replaced immediately after specimen transfer is complete. Do not allow the internal

surfaces of the tube or lid to make contact with work counters or other potential sources of contamination.

TRACE ELEMENT-FREE SPECIMEN COLLECTION PROCEDURE

SERUM

- Rinse the surface of the skin with a trace element-free solvent (e.g. deionized water).
- Use a certified trace element-free blood collection container (e.g. royal blue-top tube) to collect whole blood. NOTE: There are two different royal blue-top tubes: one with EDTA and one that has a red strip on the label for serum. Check the specimen requirements and tubes before drawing sample.
- Allow blood to clot, with the tube stored upright.
- Transfer the serum to a newly opened ARUP Trace Element-Free Transport Tube.
- Secure lid, process and transport to The Pathology Center.

URINE

- Collect urine in a clean environment, away from areas that are likely to be contaminated with the element of interest.
- Do not add preservative. Urine preservatives are a source of external contamination and are not required for most elemental testing.
- Transfer aliquots of urine to a newly opened ARUP Trace Element-Free Transport Tube.
- Secure lid, process and transport to The Pathology Center.



THE PATHOLOGY CENTER WEB SITE

Take a look at the Pathology Center website, www.thepathologycenter.org. It has wonderful resources available for both your staff and providers. Clients can order supplies and view the test catalog for the Pathology Center. There is a link to the test catalog for our reference laboratory, ARUP. The latest addition to the website is a link to ARUP Consult which is a guide to test selection and interpretation. There is a link to Lab Tests On Line which is an easy to use resource

for patients to get information about laboratory tests.

Under the education tab we have posters of the correct way to affix bar code label and tube volumes. There is a short video for the proper collection of blood cultures.

The Technical Bulletins and Microbiology Briefs are excellent resources for updates and changes.

The Microbiology Poster Series is in this section as well as College of

American Pathology (CAP) articles featuring Dr. Nancy Cornish discussing specimen collection for cultures.

If you want to know the number of influenza, strep or other isolates that are going around, click on the Microbiology Isolates for the current week. This will also give you a review of the isolates over the last year.✕✕

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS

We are eliminating the use of the Social Security number as a patient identification number.

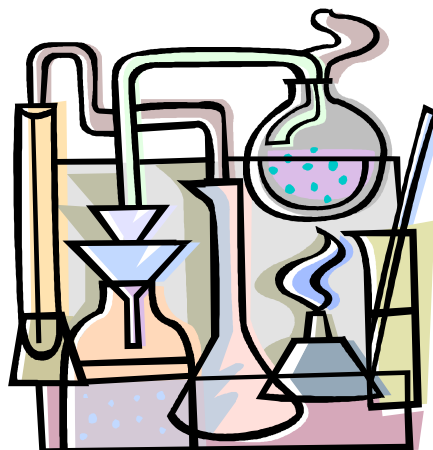
In the past we have requested the Social Security number be used as part of the identifier for confidential testing such as exposures.

To send in samples for confidential testing, use the name of your

facility as the patients last name, then "ID" and a number such as the medical record number.

Example: Regency, ID 58

Remember confidential testing will **always** be billed back to your facility as we can not bill a third party payer without patients name and insurance information.✕✕



REMINDERS

We must have the complete patient information to bill the insurance correctly. Please take a moment to ensure that the following information accompanies the requisition

- Patient's **LEGAL** name. Not Joe when his legal name is Joseph.
- Date of birth
- Current billing address
- Specific insurance information with

the group number, group name and policy number.

- Complete guarantor information if it is different than the patient.
- An ICD-9 code or complete narrative description for each test ordered.

The billing office would prefer to have a copy of the insurance card attached or a patient data sheet from your facility that contains all the patient demographics. Incorrect or incomplete billing information delays

payment and in some cases extra charges to the patient.✕✕

It is a requirement of the laboratory accrediting agency CAP and The Joint Commission that tubes and containers be labeled with two unique identifiers. **ALWAYS INCLUDE THE PATIENT'S FULL NAME AND DATE OF BIRTH ON EACH TUBE OR CONTAINER SENT TO OUR LABORATORY.**

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Watch for news about our new molecular diagnostics lab which will open in the spring of 2007



New chemistry and immunology instrumentation will be installed in the Core Lab starting in February. This will include a new concept for our lab with a front-end processor and automated line to aliquot and distribute specimens to the instruments.

The Methodist Hospital Pathology Center is committed to providing medical professionals comprehensive, cost-efficient and convenient laboratory services. Our Pathology Center specialists work with physician and other health care practitioners in the diagnosis, treatment and monitoring of their patients.

The Pathology Center strives to maintain the highest standards of testing protocols and customer service. Our team of board-certified pathologists and highly skilled professional and technical staff are devoted to serving your needs.



DIAGNOSIS CODES

CODING GUIDELINES

Each test submitted for insurance payment must include a valid ICD-9 code (diagnosis code) that supports the medical necessity for each test ordered. The coding guidelines for Medicare/Medicaid restrict the use of *possible, history of, suspected, rule out* or *questionable*. Code signs or symptoms instead of using these terms.

Screening PSA for Medicare patients must be coded with the valid screening code of V76.44. We can not add codes without verifying the information with your facility..

Diagnostic PSA must have a valid ICD-9 code for the NCD list for PSA

in order to be covered by Medicare. BPH (ICD-9 code 600.00) is now on the list of approved codes for diagnostic PSA.

Medicare has 23 test categories that follow the National Coverage Determinations (NCD). The NCD's are updated quarterly and can be accessed on the web at www.cms.gov. The NCD guidelines cover ICD-9 codes that Medicare will accept for the 23 test categories. Please have your staff review these guidelines for medical necessity if we are billing Medicare for you. We do



have in-service training available on NCD guidelines.

Medicare will only pay for one routine PAP smear every two years. The patient should sign an ABN if she has a PAP smear every year and the ABN box on the requisition should be marked yes.

Medicare ABN on File
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> NO

Always include clinical history information on the Anatomical Pathology requisition. Not only does this help the pathologist working on the specimen but if the tissue report is negative we can use this information to code the claim for billing.