

STORAGE AND TRANSPORTATION OF SPECIMENS INSTRUCTIONS

Specimens should be collected, handled, stored, and transported in accordance with LifeLabs handling instructions. In general, specimens which must be frozen to maintain integrity should be procured in a LifeLabs Patient Service Centre.

Coagulation Assays

Most coagulation assays require freezing of the plasma, but INR specimens should be stored and transported at room temperature and not frozen.

Serum Separator Tube (SST – gold top tube)

Specimens collected in an SST should be allowed to clot upright for 30 minutes then centrifuged as soon as possible.

Plain Serum Tube (red top tube)

Specimens collected in a red top tube should be allowed to clot upright for 60 minutes, centrifuged and the serum separated into a secondary aliquot tube immediately prior to transportation.

Potassium and Glucose

These assays are particularly sensitive to delays in separation. Significant increase of potassium will be observed if specimen is not properly centrifuged. To avoid a decrease in glucose due to glycolysis, **gray top tubes** must be used if the request is only for glucose determination.

When proper collection, handling and identification protocols have not been adhered to, specimens will be rejected. Proper specimen handling and identification are fundamental to patient safety.