

Blood Sample Collection for GP's

Proper identification of the patient from whom the sample is collected, the collection procedure and patient preparation (when appropriate) are key elements in the specimen collection step.

All procedures carried out on a patient need the informed consent of the patient, which in most situations, can be inferred when the patient presents for specimen collection.

Do not label samples in advance. The sample should be collected with minimum stasis and should be labelled immediately after venepuncture and as close as possible to the patient.

In order to avoid potential contamination of succeeding tubes from liquid anticoagulants it is recommended that when blood is being collected for several analyses from a single venepuncture that the order of draw as outlined in '*Order of Draw for GP's*' is followed.

Venepuncture procedure

- Ensure blood is drawn from the individual designated on requisition by positive patient identification. Question the patient by asking them to give their full name and date of birth. Never ask, "Are you Mrs Murphy". Experience indicates patients often reply "yes" to any question posed.
- Explain the procedure to the patient
- Position patient comfortably. Patient's mouth should be empty. Take note if the patient is on anti-coagulant therapy.
- Verify correct requisitions and collection tubes.
- Apply tourniquet and ensure patient's hand is closed. Avoid use for more than 1 minute as prolonged use can alter test results.
- Select vein.
- Cleanse venepuncture site using chlorotane/sterets and cleanse with a circular motion from the centre to the periphery. Allow site to dry to prevent haemolysis and patient discomfort.
- Perform venepuncture, inserting needle with bevel edge uppermost. Release tourniquet once blood flows and request the patient to open their hand. Use the correct order of draw.
- When samples are obtained remove tourniquet.
- Place clean dry gauze on venepuncture site. Cotton balls are not recommended because of the possibility of dislodging the platelet plug at the venepuncture site.
- Withdraw needle using needle protector and place in a CIN bin.
- Ask patient to press gauze to site - **do not bend arm**.
- Mix specimens by inverting gently for 4-5 times. Do not attempt to top up a short sample with blood from another container
- Examine venepuncture site making sure bleeding has stopped and apply dressing if necessary.
- Label specimens as outlined in '*Pathology Specimen Acceptance Criteria*' with:
 - ◆ Patient's full name
 - ◆ Date of birth
 - ◆ Date and time of sample collection.
 - ◆ Initial of person responsible for venepuncture
- Send properly labelled specimens to the Pathology Laboratories, packaged as outlined in '*Instructions for GPs for Transport of specimens to the Laboratory*'.

All materials, sharps etc used in the collection of samples must be disposed of safely in compliance with the national guidelines.