Eastern Pathology Alliance NHS

EPA

WEBSITE INFORMATION SHEET

Document Ref: EWG-D-001

EPA-General Sample Guidelines

Changes from previous revision

Change of document title from 'Standard Operating Procedure' to 'Website Information Sheet'.

Reference to PHE changed to UKHSA.

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Revision No.	3
Date of Issue	24/02/2023
Review interval	1 year
Signed by Authoriser or Quality Lead (+ print name)	

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General Sample Guidelines

If possible requests should be made using ICE which limits errors in patient identification and speeds up workflow in the laboratory. When making a request please ensure that all the relevant patient identification, clinical details and locations are provided, including the name of the requesting physician. Contact information must be supplied when an urgent request is made.

A request form must accompany all specimens sent to the laboratory. For high risk specimens, also attach a yellow Biohazard/Danger of Infection label.

All request forms should clearly state the following information:

- Patient's surname and forename
- Patient's address
- Date of birth
- NHS number
- Gender
- Location and Consultant where applicable
- GP practice code where applicable
- Requestor's name and telephone/bleep number
- Type of sample/specimen
- Date and time sample/specimen taken and who collected it
- Investigations/tests required
- All relevant clinical details including any treatment (recent, current and intended) and foreign travel
- Risk status - if applicable
- Date of onset and duration of illness
- Useful epidemiological information, e.g. date of contact if relevant
- Priority level

The best results are obtained when an appropriate, well taken sample, in the proper container, is delivered to the laboratory promptly and relevant clinical information is provided on the request form.

General guidelines on sample collection are:

- Please fill all sample bottles with the correct volume of blood to ensure correct anticoagulation.
- Samples must be transported promptly to the laboratory. Delays can render the samples unusable.
- Samples should be stored at room temperature until transported to the laboratory.
- The laboratory does not check the expiry date of sample collection devices when the sample arrives for testing. It is the responsibility of the person collecting and sending the sample to ensure that the device is in date when the sample is collected and with sufficient time remaining for the sample to reach the laboratory for processing.

Please contact the laboratory if there is any doubt about the correct sample to take or concerning the availability of a test.

Patient Preparation:

- Verify the patients identity against the laboratory requisition, using a minimum of four identification details (surname, forename, date of birth and hospital/NHS number), confirmed with the patient wristband if present and where possible with the patient themselves verbally.
- Review the clinician's request and the patient's written or verbal consent and that any special requirements have been met.
- Review the procedure with the patient. Inform him or her about the tests for which the samples are being collected and allow the patient to ask questions.

Please contact the laboratory if there is any doubt about the best sample to take or concerning the availability of a test.

NOTE: All procedures and investigations carried out on a patient need the informed consent of the patient.

Please note that the laboratory infers informed consent has been obtained when samples are received. It is the responsibility of the clinician requesting the test to ensure that informed consent has been obtained.

This consent includes notification to third parties where required by law for example under the Health Protection (Notification) Regulations 2010: we are required to notify any infection of public health significance to local public health department as mandated by the regulation. Please ensure your patient is aware of this before submission of samples for testing.

UKHSA NOTIFIABLE ORGANISMS

We are obliged by law to notify the UK Health Security Agency of food poisoning, TB and Meningitis organisms within 7 days of detection from a clinical sample, so please remember to advise your patient of this both when initially collecting the sample and also remind them when advising them of a positive result. If you require any additional information you can contact the UKHSA at the following:-

UK Health Security Agency
Tel: 020 7654 8000
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-health-security-agency
Twitter: @UKHSA
Facebook: https://m.facebook.com/UKHealthSecurityAgency.

For the full list of notifiable organisms visit:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1108438/UKHSA_Laboratory_reporting_guidelines__1_.pdf

Rejection of unacceptable samples

Samples may not be suitable for testing if they are so inadequately labelled that the patient's identification is in doubt, or if they have leaked or been contaminated. If samples are rejected every effort is made to inform the requesting doctor first.

Samples and request forms are checked on receipt to confirm the patient identification (PID) information provided on the form and specimen agree. There is a minimum of 4 PID data items, i.e. Surname, Forename, Date of Birth and ID Number (Hospital or NHS) required by the laboratory and these must match in order for the sample to be accepted. It is good practice for us to have location and date and time of sample but is not absolutely necessary. If errors are found the laboratory will contact the requestor, explain the problem and request a repeat sample.

For samples that are not easily repeated (such as CSF or paediatric samples) the problem will first be discussed with a BMS from the relevant section who will make a decision on whether testing may be allowed to proceed (usually after discussion with the clinician concerned). Usually the requestor will be given the opportunity to come to Blood Sciences and complete patient information on the sample or request and sign a disclaimer. If the sample is tested the report will clearly state the nature of the problem as a comment. Alternatively, the requesting clinician will be asked to send a repeat sample.

For full details regarding incompletely labelled samples or forms please contact the laboratory.