

Specimen Retention Requirements

Up-date



Listed below are the specimen retention requirements for samples sent to St. Luke's Laboratory.

Not all specimens need to be separated before sending with the courier. Separate and freeze specimens only if you cannot get them to us within the below guidelines. A screw top tube should be used for frozen samples that we will refer to a reference lab. Reference labs require frozen samples be sent in a screw top container as a safety issue.

These are the guidelines we present, but we will always do what we can to get you the results that you need for your patient. Guidelines for other tests may be found in the St. Luke's Test Catalogue. <http://stlukeslaboratory.testcatalog.org/>

Test	Storage Conditions	Length of Time
AFP, Tumor Marker	Refrigerated	3 days
ABG	Cannot be added on	Must be processed immediately after collection
Blood cultures	Cannot be added on	Must be collected using sterile technique into a sterile container
BNP	Refrigerated	Plasma from samples greater than 1 hour old needs to be separated. Plasma needs to be frozen if transport is greater than 24 hours.
CA 125	Refrigerated	1 day
Hematology Specimens	Room Temperature Refrigerated	24 hours 48 hours
ESR/Sed Rate	Room Temperature Refrigerated EDTA	4 hours 24 hours
Estradiol	Refrigerated	2 days if >2 days sample should be frozen
Folate	Refrigerated	8 hours or send frozen
FT3	Refrigerated	7 days
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Lactic Acid	Collected on ice	Must be sent to St. Luke's immediately. Cannot be added on.
Potassium	Refrigerated	7 day
Protine	If the patient is not on heparin and the tube is unopened and centrifuged or not centrifuged, the specimen may be sent at room temperature or refrigerated for up to 24 hours; otherwise, double spin the specimen to provide platelet poor plasma and freeze the plasma.	
PSA	Refrigerated	48 hours or freeze serum if >48 hours
PTH	Refrigerated	EDTA plasma is the preferred sample type, although serum is acceptable. EDTA specimens should be spun and separated immediately. The plasma is stable at RT for 8 hours, refrigerated for 72 hours, and then frozen. Serum is stable for 4 hours at RT, 48 hours refrigerated, and then frozen.
Retics	Refrigerated	72 hours
Rubella	Refrigerated	7 days
Type and Screen	Normally cannot be added on	Patient must be banded at time of collection. Can only be added if extra tube blood bank is collected.
TSH	Refrigerated	5 days (if reflexive TSH, 2 days)
Vitamin B12	Refrigerated	48 hours; freeze sample if >48 hours
Vitamin D	Refrigerated	5 days