

TITLE: Laboratory Specimen Labeling

POLICY SAMPLE

APPLIES TO: Employees

POLICY: (Name of practice) will take steps to ensure correct labeling of all laboratory specimens with two forms of positive patient identification. All patients must be positively identified before their laboratory samples are obtained. This policy outlines the steps for positive patient identification and specimen labeling to assure compliance, collection quality, and specimen integrity by following appropriate collection instructions.

PURPOSE: Patient safety, patient satisfaction, and quality of test results are dependent on the receipt and proper identification of specimens. A mislabeled specimen can lead to devastating consequences for a patient. Accurate specimen labeling decreases the risk of potential harm caused by labeling errors.

PROCEDURE: **Labeling Process**

All clinical staff have a responsibility for ensuring specimens are correctly labeled, as outlined below:

Positive patient identification / specimen labeling for specimens collected in exam rooms

1. Three labels with the patient's first and last name and date of birth will be printed from the practice management system at each office visit.
2. The MA/RN/LPN rooming the patient, or the Medical Receptionist printing the labels, is responsible for verifying the label information is correct with the patient.
 - a. Verification will be done by handing the label to the patient and asking patient to verify first and last name is spelled correctly, and date of birth is correct.
 - i. If any information on the label is incorrect, the employee verifying the label will:
 1. Verify that the correct patient's chart is open by verifying another piece of information, e.g. phone number, address, etc. If the correct chart is open, then the employee will:
 - a. Correct the information in the practice management system.
 - b. Re-print the labels.
 - c. Re-verify the information on the label with the patient.
 - b. Once the patient has verified that the label information is correct, the employee will initial the labels to indicate that the verification process has been completed.
3. After verification, the MA/LPN/RN will leave the labels in the exam room in order to label any specimens collected during the visit.
 - a. If the labels are unused during the visit, the MA/LPN/RN will place it in the shredder immediately after the appointment.
 - b. If a specimen is collected during the visit:
 - i. All specimens will be labeled in the exam room, ideally in the presence of the patient. If a specimen is collected by a clinician and not labeled by the clinician in the presence of the patient, it is acceptable for an MA/LPN/RN to label the specimen after the patient has left. Unlabeled specimens will not be taken out of the exam room.
 - ii. The MA/LPN/RN will print additional labels from the practice management system as needed in order to individually label each specimen and will check additional labels printed against the original label that was verified by the patient in order to ensure information matches prior to putting the label on a specimen. The MA/LPN/RN will initial the labels after checking to ensure they match the original label verified by the patient.

- iii. The MA/LPN/RN will transport the labeled specimen directly to the lab drop-off location without stopping along the way. The specimen will not be placed in the nurse's station or on staff desks.
- iv. The MA/LPN/RN will take ownership of the specimen and will not pass it off for another staff member to label or transport.

Positive patient identification / specimen labeling for blood draws in the lab areas

1. The Lab Assistant (or MA/LPN/RN serving in the role) will call the patient by their name into the drawing area.
2. The Lab Assistant will verify the order and print label(s) from practice management system.
3. The Lab Assistant is responsible for verifying the label information is correct with the patient.
 - a. Verification will be done by handing the label to the patient and asking her to verify that first and last name is spelled correctly, and date of birth is correct.
 - i. If any information on the label is incorrect, the Lab Assistant will:
 1. Correct the information in the practice management system.
 2. Re-Print the label(s).
 3. Re-verify the information on the label with the patient.
 - b. Once the patient has verified the label information is correct, the Lab Assistant will initial the labels to indicate that the verification process has been completed.
4. Once the blood draw is complete, the Lab Assistant will label each specimen with labels in the presence of the patient.

Positive patient identification / specimen labeling for amniocentesis and chorionic villus sampling (CVS) specimens

1. Labels with the patient's first and last name and date of birth will be printed from the practice management system prior to each amniocentesis or CVS procedure by the Genetic Counselor, Sonographer or Ultrasound Assistant.
2. The Sonographer who performs the ultrasound and labels the amniocentesis or CVS specimen(s) is responsible for verifying the label information is correct with the patient.
 - a. Verification will be done by handing the label(s) to the patient and verify that first and last name is spelled correctly, and date of birth is correct.
 - i. If any information on the label is incorrect, the Sonographer will:
 1. Verify that the correct patient's chart is open by verifying another piece of information, e.g. phone number, address, etc. If the correct chart is open, the Sonographer will coordinate with the Ultrasound Assistant or front office staff to correct the information in the practice management system and re-print the label(s). The Sonographer will then re-verify the information on the label(s) with the patient.
 - b. Once the patient has verified that the label information is correct, the Sonographer will initial the label(s) to indicate that the verification process has been completed.
3. After verification, the Sonographer will label the amniocentesis or CVS specimens with the verified label(s) in the presence of the patient. Unlabeled specimens will not be taken out of the ultrasound room in which they were collected.

Processing of specimens collected in exam rooms

Upon receiving specimens collected in exam rooms in the lab area, and prior to sending to the Central Lab, the Lab Assistant/MA/LPN/RN will:

1. Check all specimens to ensure they are labeled with the correct patient label.
 - a. If none of the labels are initialed by the MA/LPN/RN, the Lab Assistant should return the specimens to the MA/LPN/RN to ensure they were verified and notify the practice manager.
 - b. Verify the order in practice management system and send specimen(s) with requisition(s) to laboratory for testing.
 - c. For reference lab specimens such as pap smears and cultures, verify that the order and labeled specimens match the information on the requisition prior to

either sending specimen to outside laboratory for processing or to the organization's main laboratory for processing.

Downtime labeling procedure

If the practice management system is down and/or the label printer is not operational, the clinical staff member responsible for labeling the patients specimen will handwrite the patient's name and date of birth on a blank label and confirm that the information is correct by showing it to the patient. If information is correct, the patient will be asked to initial to show that the verification process has been completed. If multiple specimens are collected, the clinical staff member will handwrite patient information on additional blank labels, check to verify that it matches the patient-verified label, and initial the labels.

Orders / requisitions

1. Specimen requisition and sample labeling are verified upon receipt and prior to processing. Requisitions will be checked for the following information:
 - a. Patient's complete first and last names and unique identifying number (patient ID number or date of birth).
 - b. Date and time of collection.
 - c. Initials of collector
2. All specimens received must be accompanied by a matching complete electronic order. Reference lab specimens such as pap smears and cultures must have a matching complete electronic order and a paper requisition.
3. Acceptable specimens that meet the labeling criteria will be processed and tested by the appropriate testing lab.
4. Unlabeled or improperly labeled specimens that do not meet proper labeling criteria will be required to be re-collected. The laboratory employee determining specimens do not meet criteria will contact the MA/LPN/RN at the appropriate office, who will then notify the patient. The Practice Manager will receive notification of the error via the laboratory and/or MA/LPN/RN.

Practice Administrator Date

Chief Medical Officer Date

Lab Medical Director Date

Director of Operations Date