



Specimen Labelling

Pre-analytical errors account for up to 70% of all mistakes made in laboratory diagnostic processes. These errors may occur during patient preparation, sample collection/labelling, sample transportation, sample preparation, and sample storage.

Pathlab continues to work diligently to minimise these risks where we can and as a result we have reduced incidents of pre-analytical errors.

The largest remaining source of pre-analytical error is with specimen labelling. The consequences of a labelling error not being detected or resolved can result in avoidable patient harm. The majority of labelling errors are from patient self-labelled Microbiology specimens, for example faecal, urine and sputum samples.

We would like to re-emphasize the importance of correct labelling of the specimens to facilitate optimal processing of patient samples.

All specimens must be labelled with a minimum of three points of identification:

- Surname
- First Name (please use Given name, not 'Known As')
- DOB and/or NHI

Please ensure the above information is passed on to all patients for any self-collection required.

All sub-standard labelled specimens* (unlabelled, discrepant or poorly identified specimens) will be rejected and re-collection requested.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions pertaining to this matter.

Specimen Services Department
07 858 0799, ext 6892

**Excluding Irreplaceable/precious specimens e.g. Histology samples are managed by a dedicated process to ensure accurate identification.*

**Please ensure all members of your institution
receive a copy of this clinical update.**