



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 of this effort our 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.

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 3 points of identifications:

- Surname
- First Name (Please use Given name, not "Known as")
- DOB and/or NHI

Information must be written legibly or printed on an appropriately sized label. Please **do not** use labels that overhang the sides of the collection tubes as a "flag"; overhang the bottom of the tubes; covering part of the lid of the collection tubes or bundle multiple tubes together with one label.



Incorrect labelling of sample tubes may result in specimens getting stuck in the automated processing systems causing unnecessary delays or issues with processing. Many labelling errors are from patient self-labelled Microbiology specimens, for example faecal, urine and sputum samples. 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 required)

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

Specimen Services Department, 07 8580795, ext 6892

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