



The Pathology Laboratory (APMC)
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Specimen Stability and Integrity

Specimen integrity is necessary to obtain accurate testing results. We have recognized that several of our clients are holding culture specimens after hours of operation. These specimens often exceed their stability time for testing. Patient reports are indicated with a statement that test results may be affected. To remedy this situation, we would like to share how specimens should be handled after hours, weekends, and holidays. Path Lab hours of operation are M-F 7:00 to 5:00, Saturday 8-11 and closed on holidays.

We have partnered with CHRISTUS- Lake Area Hospital and West Cal Cam (WCCH) to perform testing. For CHRISTUS, the specimen should be brought to the hospital laboratory along with the written order and billing information. The hospital will bill the patient's insurance. The requisition should be filled out completely so that results are delivered to the ordering provider. The lab is located on the first floor near the emergency entrance. For WCCH, the specimen can be brought to either the draw station or the hospital lab. Follow the same instructions above regarding proper completion of requisition and providing billing information.

Each client should have a copy of The Path Lab's directory of service. It can be found on our website at www.thepathlab.com. There is a separate Directory of services box.

Tests that clients should recognize as having a short stability are listed below. Please review the Directory of Services for exact times.

Cultures (see Directory of Services for each type of culture)
Body fluids (Cell Counts)
Several Chemistry tests (see Directory of Services)
CBC
Sed rate
Therapeutic drugs
Flu
OCP and Stool Culture
Protine and PTT
Semen Analysis

Please remember specimen centrifugation is very important to obtain accurate results for many assays. Recommended centrifuge time and speed are 10 minutes at 3100 to 3500 RPM.

If you have any questions, contact Nicho Bourque at nbourque@thepathlab.com or 337-312-1280.