

3 Pathology Requests

3.1 Routine Pathology Requests

1. Requests for pathology tests should be written on the appropriate pathology form.
2. All completed pathology request forms should include the following information:
 - full name of patient
 - sex
 - date of birth
 - Unit Record Number (UR No.)
 - health facility
 - telephone number if urgent
 - consultant (mandatory for computer registration)
 - name and signature of requesting medical officer **or a person authorised under a Health Management Protocol (HMP)**
 - the investigation(s) required
 - relevant clinical details including medication and fasting status
 - person collecting specimen
 - time and date of collection
3. In addition to the above, **crossmatching** requests **MUST** include:
 - the number and type of units required
 - the date and time the units are required
 - any previous transfusions
 - known transfusion reactions
 - previous pregnancies
 - any known blood group antibodies
 - sample and request form must be signed by the collector
4. The following information is the minimum standard required on each **microbiological** request form in addition to 2 above:
 - suspected diagnosis (clinical details)
 - time of onset
 - any antimicrobial treatment
 - underlying illnesses or conditions
 - recent travel
 - the type or source of the specimen

NOTE: The medical officer's name is required to allow personal reporting of urgent or preliminary results. Specimens without a medical officer's name **will not** be processed.
5. Examinations for acid fast organisms (mycobacteria, actinomyces), chlamydia, fungi, viruses or unusual microorganisms which will not be detected in "routine" cultures must be specifically requested.
6. Note the site of collection and tests requested, eg. culture (aerobic, anaerobic, fungal), microscopy (+/- special stains), toxin assay, antibiotic sensitivities
7. For Continuous Ambulatory Peritoneal Dialysis (CAPD) specimens please note the presence or absence of antibiotics in the effluent.
8. **Infectious disease hazard** - please indicate on the request form if the patient has an infectious disease such as Hepatitis.
9. Please ensure the request form is placed in the plastic sleeve of the biohazard bag facing outward, thus facilitating photocopying through the plastic in the event of a spillage.
10. In cases where extreme confidentiality is required please contact the laboratory.

3.2 Urgent Pathology Requests

1. Telephone the appropriate laboratory department if the tests are required urgently.
2. Requests marked “urgent” are prioritised and processed as soon as possible.
3. Each laboratory will have a slightly different list of tests that may be performed urgently. Please check with your local laboratory.

3.3 Medico-legal Pathology Requests

Medico-legal investigations may include:

- blood alcohol determinations
- coroners’ autopsies
- vaginal swabs in the case of suspected rape
- saliva
- hair samples
- skin/fingernail scrapings
- clothing
- blood samples for paternity testing

The medical officer must identify the patient and collect the blood him/herself. Even then, legal requirements may not be satisfied as an unbroken chain of the handling of the specimen is difficult to establish. Tests which are of an essentially forensic nature and applicable to State laws should be discussed with the local Government Medical Officer.

If a general practitioner requires an independent medico-legal blood alcohol, he/she should contact the Pathology Queensland, Brisbane (07) 3274 9019. The laboratory requires a monetary fee before a result is issued.