

4 Specimen Labelling

Queensland Health Pathology Service laboratories are accredited with the National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA), Australia and the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia. A requirement of accreditation is that all specimens should be clearly and unambiguously labelled. To ensure that this occurs the following procedure should be used.

- At the patient bedside, label tubes after collection
- Patient to check information is correct on all labels
- All labels and requests should be signed by the collector
- All blood specimens must be labelled by hand
- Self-adhesive labels must not be used as they will interfere with the automatic loading of some specimens onto the analysers
- Specimens should be labelled with:
 - patient's surname
 - given name
 - facility record number (UR)
 - date of birth
 - date and time of collection
 - collector's initials (essential for all transfusion specimens)
 - hospital or clinic
- The request form and the specimen label must carry identical patient information
- For neonates, both the specimen and the form should be labelled "B/O" (baby of), then mother's given name and surname. Please do not use mother's UR number on the form or specimen
- When labelling slides please label the frosted end with the patient's details (both names, DOB and UR No. if available) using a lead pencil. Add specimen type eg. vaginal, vulval, for PAP smear
- Label the slide NOT the mailer
- Label air-dried smears "AD"
- Do NOT cover the barcode on blood culture bottles as it is required for recognition of the bottle if an automated system is used by the laboratory
- Label the bag not the packaging for CAPD specimens
- Label histology/cytology specimen jars to indicate which specimen is fixed and which is fresh
- When 2 specimens from the same site have been collected to be processed at different laboratories please ensure that they are labelled with associated information as to the specific laboratory to which they are to be forwarded
- Specimens which are inadequately labelled may not be processed
- **Unlabelled specimens will not be processed**