

GUIDELINES FOR SAMPLE STORAGE

The objective of all pathology investigations is to examine human tissue and fluids in the laboratory that best represents the status found in the living organism. To meet this objective samples collected need to be taken into test specific containers, preserved in appropriate chemicals and stored in optimum conditions.

The following sample storage guidelines are given as general recommendation but may not be ideal for every test measured. If there are specific concerns about stability the user should contact the laboratory before collecting the sample.

NORMAL WEEK DAY STORAGE

Recommended storage conditions for samples prior to normal courier transport collection are:

- **Biochemistry, Haematology and Immunology** samples should be stored at **room temperatures that do not exceed 25C**. Do not keep samples near a source of heat or in direct sunlight.
- **Microbiology** samples (urine, sputum, faeces, swabs, etc) can be maintained at ambient temperature for a short time or may be stored in a refrigerator (2-8C) **but please ensure they are not overlooked when other samples are collected by the courier**.

NEVER DELAY - ALWAYS DISPATCH SAMPLES WITH THE NEXT AVAILABLE COURIER COLLECTION

OVERNIGHT STORAGE

If delays are unavoidable the following guidelines should be observed as sample integrity can vary. In all cases storage should be no longer than overnight and samples/request forms should *show the date the sample was taken*.

Biochemistry:

Store all samples in a refrigerator (2-8C).

Blood samples will be unsuitable for Potassium, Total CO₂ and Phosphate analysis.

Haematology:

Malaria screening samples **must not** be stored – arrange urgent transport to the laboratory.

Store all other specimens in a refrigerator.

White Blood Cell count will deteriorate with time.

Serum folate may increase on storage.

Microbiology:

Microbiology samples should be stored overnight in a fridge (2-8C), **except** for mycology samples and blood cultures.

Cellular Pathology

Cell Path samples (small tissue bxs, gynae or non gynae) generally should not be refrigerated.