

Blanchard Valley Health System Laboratory Services

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Instructions for Proper Specimen Labeling (LTR27571)

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Instructions for Proper Specimen Labeling

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When collecting any type of specimen from a patient it is of the utmost importance to use proper labeling techniques to ensure proper specimen identification. Due to the large volume and wide variety of specimens received by the laboratory, identification is extremely important to prevent improper handling and possible errors in identification. Proper specimen labeling also prevents delays in specimen label the laboratory must halt processing of the specimen in order to investigate and discover the missing information. Proper labeling of patient specimens also maintains the chain of specimen identification between departments, who may not have contact with the patient and thus do not know to whom the specimen belongs. This particularly applies to specimens originating outside the hospital. The following information is desired on any specimen received by the laboratory:

1. Patient's full, proper name. (no nicknames or abbreviations)
2. Patient's Date of Birth and/or Social Security Number
3. Time of collection.
4. Date of collection.
5. Initials of the person collecting the specimen.
6. Source and/or Description for all Microbiology specimen types.

It is not too difficult, nor is it too time consuming, to provide the needed information. A properly labeled specimen prevents processing delays, prevents possible specimen rejection, and prevents possible identification errors. If all persons who collect patient specimens follow these simple guidelines, test results can be made available in a much more efficient manor. Thank you for your cooperation.