

## Pathology Requesting Guidelines for GP's and Clinicians (Excluding Requests to Blood Transfusion)

Ashford & St Peter's Hospital NHS Trust procedure for Pathology test requesting (Haematology, Biochemistry, Microbiology, Immunology, Histology and Cytology)

### Introduction

The database for Pathology is very large. Approximately 5½ million tests are carried out per annum. Each day the directorate receives 2,000 Biochemistry and Haematology samples, 800 Microbiology Samples, up to 150 Histology and Cytology samples. There is therefore ample scope for errors in specimen identification and the possibility of issuing incorrect results. Adherence to this requesting procedure is essential to reduce or eliminate these errors.

**Inadequate patient identification or inadequate labelling at the point of sample collection may lead to Pathology results being assigned to the wrong patient or incorrect results being assigned.**

This may have serious consequences for the patient. The directorate follows the requesting guidelines as laid out by the Institute of Biomedical Science. (IBMS)

### 17.2 Pre-labelled and re-labelled blood samples

- ✚ National guidelines from the NPSA and NAP and best practice guidelines dictate that all blood sample bottles must be labelled at the patient's bedside. If in outpatients/GP clinic labelling of the sample bottles must take place in front of the patient. **ON NO ACCOUNT MUST SAMPLE BOTTLES BE PRE-LABELLED AWAY FROM THE PATIENTS BEDSIDE. THERE IS A SERIOUS RISK OF TAKING BLOOD FROM THE WRONG PATIENT.**
  
- ✚ Also Sample bottles that have been labelled and then the name/details crossed out, and another patients details added may be rejected by the laboratory. In such cases as this the senior laboratory staff must inform the requester as the reason for rejection of the sample.

### Procedure

1. Investigations must be received on an individual named patient basis. Only appropriately qualified staff should initiate Pathology requests.
2. The following table outlines the minimum and preferred labelling requirements for both the specimen and the request form. Addressograph labels should always be used if available. Please remember to place a label on all parts of a multi part form.

## Appendix C Continued : (Page 2 of 2)

	<b>ESSENTIAL</b>	<b>DESIRABLE</b>
<b>SAMPLE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Minimum of 3 identifiers, i.e. full name and date of birth/hospital or NHS number.</li> <li>- And Full Name must match with the request form.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Minimum of 4 identifiers, including hospital/NHS number</li> <li>- Date and time of collection</li> <li>- Location of origin</li> </ul>
<b>REQUEST FORM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Full name and date of birth/ Hosp or NHS number must match the sample.</li> <li>-Location/destination for the report and/ or GP/consultant name printed legibly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Date and time of collection</li> <li>- Specimen type</li> <li>- Clinical information</li> <li>- Sex</li> <li>- Name and signature of requesting clinician.</li> <li>-Bleep number of requesting clinician.</li> <li>- Patient address ( for GP requests)</li> </ul>

3. When labelling sample for Neonates always use the hospital number for identification purposes. The baby may not have been formally named when the sample was taken and there is potential confusion with samples from a parent. The mother's hospital number **MUST NOT** be used for these babies. **In the case of twins Hospital numbers issued must vary by at least 3 characters.** It is permissible to label the twins I and II until such time that they are formally named.
4. Samples for HIV testing or genetic testing **WILL NOT** be processed without 3 identifiers. For BHU and OH samples the anonymous identifier/ID number counts as 2 separate identifiers. A fresh sample must be requested from the clinician as a priority.

Samples for the Blood Transfusion laboratory **WILL NOT** be processed without 4 identifiers, which must be hand written on the sample bottle. For GP samples the patients address may be counted as one of the 4 identifiers, but not the postcode or a mobile number.

5. Samples should only be designated as **“URGENT”** if the case is a clinical emergency. Do not specify as urgent for convenience as this is an abuse of the term and leads to delays in routine tests.
6. In the case of unidentified casualties, for example from road traffic accidents, it is permissible to accept samples with a hospital number only, providing the sample and form are also identified as “unknown Male/Female” with a tag or “Baxter” number if more than one such person exists.
7. The Pathology Directorate will adopt a common sense approach to minor errors, but the standards of requesting set out here must be maintained. Unlabelled or grossly mislabelled specimens even if accompanied by a correct request form represent a significant clinical risk to your patients and a risk of litigation against you, Pathology and the Trust. Senior Consultant and Biomedical staff will take and record a decision where samples are unrepeatably but in general unlabelled or mislabelled samples will not be processed and will have to be repeated. The requester will be notified of the breach in procedure.