

Pathology Sample Packing and Storage

- Please ensure all lids on sample containers are properly secured before sending
- Pack haematology, chemistry and immunology samples together
- Use a separate specimen bag for Microbiology, Histology, Cytology and Transfusion requests
- Tissue samples for Microbiology should be put in sealed sterile containers. Do not add formalin to these samples.
- All specimens should be placed in special transport boxes (Red Boxes) or bagged and sealed, ready for placement in the Specimen Transport Bags. Each bag is clearly labelled with contact details in the advent of an accident/incident.

Unboxed samples:	All specimens should be bagged in individual specimen bags and sealed. Do not place request form and specimen in the same part of the specimen bag. The request form should go in the paper pocket of the specimen bag. Please do not staple the request form to the bag. All specimens from GP surgeries should then be placed in the sorting bags.	
	Pathology specimen bag	Pathology sorting bag
	Haematology Transfusion Clinical Biochemistry Immunology	Together
	Cytology Histology Microbiology	Together Separate bag
Red-Box samples	All specimens should be placed in racks in the red boxes. Any accompanying request forms or other paperwork should be put in the slot at the back of the racks. Please ensure the lid is on properly before handing to the driver to protect the integrity of the patients' samples and to ensure the safety of the transport courier. Please do not place samples under the racks - the lab won't know they are there and they won't be tested.	
What goes in the red transport box?		
Haematology blood tubes	Yes	
Chemistry blood tubes	Yes	
ACR urines (yellow top)	Yes	
Immunology blood tubes	Yes	
Antenatal group and save	Yes	
Crossmatch samples (with red label)	NO	Pack these separately in transfusion sample bags
Antenatal microbiology screen	NO	Pack these separately in microbiology sample bags
Other Microbiology blood samples	NO	Pack these separately in microbiology sample bags

Samples should be securely stored in a designated sample collection area, away from direct light and heat sources (e.g. window sill) and out of reach of patients. The pathology [test catalogue](#) indicates which sample types should be refrigerated and which should be stored at room temperature. **Incorrect storage may lead to erroneous results with potentially catastrophic implications.** Some samples may be stored overnight. See The pathology [test catalogue](#) for details.

GP surgeries: Bagged and boxed specimens should be removed to the reception area 10 minutes before the scheduled pick-up time. There are schedules for each GP practice served by the Specimen Transport system.

The Specimen Transport courier will transfer the samples to a specimen transport container for forward delivery to the laboratories.