

FOR ANY TEST REQUIRING FROZEN PLASMA FROM A LIGHT BLUE TOP TUBE

Coagulation assays are extremely sensitive to methods of sample collection and processing. Test results are a direct reflection of sample integrity. It is the client's responsibility to adhere strictly to processing guidelines.

ANTICOAGULANT

3.2% sodium citrate is the anticoagulant of choice for all coagulation tests that require plasma. These tubes have light blue tops.

ORDER OF DRAW

Light blue top (citrate) tubes should be collected before other tubes. Draw approximately 2 mL of blood into a citrate tube (for discard) and then continue to draw the appropriate number of properly filled citrate tubes. For a single test, draw one blue top tube. For panels or groups of tests, 4 blue top tubes are sufficient.

COLLECTION

Venipuncture is the preferred method of collection. If good blood flow cannot be obtained, a repeat venipuncture is recommended. Use of a size 21-gauge needle (size 23 minimum) will help avoid hemolysis. When absolutely necessary, samples may be collected from catheters maintained with saline only (no heparin). Discard the first 5-10mL of blood collected.

ACCEPTABLE FILL VOLUMES

Each size of tube must be properly filled, as the ratio of blood to anticoagulant is critical to testing. Patients with high hematocrits (>55%) should be collected into special hematocrit-adjusted tubes (available upon request).

PREPARATION OF PLATELET POOR PLASMA

It is critical that the following specimen processing procedure be followed exactly.

1. Within 3 hours of collection (1 hour for any type of Heparin Assay), centrifuge capped citrate tube(s) for 10 minutes at 1500g-2000g.
2. Using a plastic transfer pipet, remove most of the plasma. Place this plasma in a plastic centrifuge tube with cap. Do not combine plasma from multiple tubes.
3. Using a wooden applicator stick, check the cells remaining in the blue top tube(s) for a clot. Do not submit plasma from tubes in which a clot was detected.
4. Centrifuge the plasma (in the plastic centrifuge tube(s) from Step 2 above) for another 10 minutes at 1500g - 2000g.
5. Using a plastic transfer pipet, remove the top 3/4 of plasma from Step 4 into a plastic aliquot tube (one aliquot tube per blue top tube drawn). Do not combine plasma from multiple tubes. Do not disturb the plasma in the bottom of the spun tube, where any residual platelets will be.
6. Aliquots with visible red cells or hemolysis (pink plasma) are not acceptable.
7. Label tubes with patient identifier, sample type (citrate plasma) and date and time of collection.
8. Freeze plasma immediately (preferably with the tubes in an upright position). The use of a frost-free freezer is discouraged as freeze-thaw cycles may lead to sample integrity issues.

Samples must remain frozen during transport. Use dry ice if necessary to guarantee that specimens will not thaw in transport.

PLEASE SAVE BLOOD REMAINING IN THE LIGHT BLUE TOP TUBES FOR ONE WEEK

TriCore recommends saving the cells left in at least one of the original light blue top tubes for 1 week in the refrigerator in case factor mutation testing is desired.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS

In the Albuquerque area, please call TriCore's Special Coagulation Department at 505-938-8844. Outside Albuquerque, call us toll-free at 800-245-3296, ext. 8844.