

Laboratory Update

Potassium Testing & Sealing Specimen Bags Properly

Potassium Testing [LAB114]

We have recently identified an increase in potassium specimens with compromised integrity, resulting in inaccurate elevated potassium results and the need for recollection in some cases. To help ensure accurate patient results, it is important that specimens are processed promptly after collection. Delays in centrifugation, difficult draws, hemolysis, or underfilled tubes can all contribute to falsely elevated potassium levels. When collection is challenging, please take extra care to obtain the proper specimen volume and follow the required handling procedures to maintain specimen quality.

Collection Requirements:

Preferred Tube: Light Green Heparin PST (LI GRN HEP PST)

Specimen Preparation: Collect in a Green PST tube, centrifuge as soon as possible after collection, and refrigerate this specimen.

Alternate Specimens: Gold SST or Red Top Tube

Minimum Volume: 1.0 mL

Important Reminders: Centrifuge specimens promptly following collection to preserve specimen integrity and minimize hemolysis.

- Ensure tubes are filled appropriately, especially during difficult draws.
- Hemolyzed or improperly processed specimens may produce falsely elevated potassium results and may require recollection.

Bagging Specimens: A reminder to all clients that properly sealing specimen bags with the correct documentation or labels is a critical component of maintaining specimen integrity, ensuring safe transportation, and supporting consistent turnaround times. Unsealed or improperly sealed bags can lead to leakage, contamination risks, delayed processing, and potential specimen rejection. Please verify that all specimen bags are securely sealed before courier pickup to help us maintain the highest standards of safety and service for our team and yours.