

Evaluation of the Patient Sample

SCHEDULE 2: Chemistry Sample Stability

The table below lists the stability limits for each test in plasma or serum in a centrifuged tube unless otherwise stated. For red-top serum samples; serum must be separated from cells immediately after centrifugation and aliquoted.

- Stability data may be based on method sheets, CLSI guidelines, or NH stability studies.
- Stability is measured from collection time to receipt at the examination site.

Transportation Guidelines:

- Samples are to be centrifuged and separated at the collection site if they cannot be transported to the examination site within the defined time limits to protect the stability of the test.
- **Winter Transport:**
 - Do not ship whole blood samples by ground at temperatures below -15°C.
 - Centrifuge and ship serum/plasma if able
 - Or hold and batch samples until weather warms up
 - Ship by air if unable to hold samples and stability at risk.
 - Delay collection of whole blood samples on outpatients. Ask patient to return when weather warms up.



SAMPLE STABILITY

Test	Sample Test	15-25°C	2-8°C	-20°C	Misc.	Instructions
Acetaminophen	Red top		2 days	1 month		
	RST		5 days			
Albumin	SST/RST/PST/Red top	10 weeks	5 months	4 months		
Alk Phos	SST/RST/PST/Red top	7 days	7 days	2 months		
ALT	SST/RST/PST/Red top	3 days	7 days		>7 days	
Ammonia	Lavender top		15 min			Ammonia to be tested locally only
Amylase	SST/RST/PST/Red top	7 days	1 month			

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Test	Sample Test	15-25°C	2-8°C	-20°C	Misc.	Instructions
Ferritin	SST/RST/PST/Red top	24 hours	7 days	12 months		
FSH	SST		2 days			
	RST/Red top		14 days			
FT3	SST/RST/Red top		7 days	1 month		Freeze only once
FT4	SST/RST/Red top	5 days	7 days	1 month		Freeze only once
fFN	Cervicovaginal sample collected					



Test	Sample Test	15-25°C	2-8°C	-20°C	Misc.	Instructions
Gentamicin	RST		5 days			
	Red top		7 days	4 weeks		
GGT	SST/RST/PST/Red top	7 days	7 days	1 year		
Glucose	SST/RST/PST/Red top	8 hours	3 days			
Haptoglobin	SST/RST/Red top	3 months	8 months			
HgA1C	Lavender top	3 days	7 days	6 months		Freeze whole blood only once. Mix specimen thoroughly after thawing.
HCG+B	SST/RST/PST/Red top		3 days	12 months		
HDL	SST/RST/PST/Red top		7 days		1 month	
IGA	SST/RST/Red top	8 months	8 months	8 months		
IGG	SST/RST/Red top	4months	8 months	8 months		
IGM	SST/RST/Red top	2 months	4 months	6 months		
Iron	SST/RST/PST/Red top	7 days	3 weeks	1 year		
Lactic Acid	Grey top (Na fluoride)	8 hours see instructions	14 days			Collect on ice Centrifuge at 4°C within 15 min and separate.
LD	SST/RST/PST/Red top	7 days	4 days	6 weeks		
LH	SST/RST/Red top		14 days	6 months		
Lipase	SST/RST/PST/Red top	7 days	7 days	1 year		



Test		Sample Test	15-25°C	2-8°C	-20°C	Misc.	Instructions
Lithium		Red top	1 day	7 days	6 months		
		RST		5 days			
Magnesium		SST/RST/PST/Red top	7 days	7 days	1 year		
NT Pro-BNP		SST/RST/PST/Red top	3 days	6 days	24 months		
Osmolality	Fecal	Liquid stool	48 hours	7 days	14 days (preferred)		Refrigerate stool sample within 30 minutes Do not send 'formed' stool sample
	Serum	RST/SST	24 hours	7 days (preferred)	7 days		Refrigerate serum within 30 minutes
	Urine	Random urine	36 hours	14 days	14 days		
Phenobarbital		Red top only	7 days	7 days			
Phenytoin		RST		5 days			
		Red top	4 days	4 days			
Phosphorus		SST/RST/PST/Red top	1 day	4 days	1 year		
Progesterone		SST/RST/Red top		5 days see instructions	6 months		48 hour stability on separator tube – must be poured off



Test	Sample Test	15-25°C	2-8°C	-20°C	Misc.	Instructions
Prolactin	SST/RST/Red top		SST 7 days see instructions	6 months		24 hour stability on separator tube – must be poured off
			Red top serum 14 days see instructions			
			RST 5 days see instructions			
PSA	SST/RST/PST/Red top	24 hours	5 days	6 months		
PTH	Lavender top	2 days see instructions	3 days	6 months		Collect on ice. Centrifuge at 4°C ASAP and separate.
RF	SST/Red top	1 day	7 days	3 months		
	RST		5 days			
Salicylate	Red top		2 weeks			
	RST		5 days			
Testosterone	SST/RST/Red top		7 days	6 months		
Theophylline	RST		7 days			
	Red top		1 week			
Tobramycin	RST/Red top		5 days			



Test	Sample Test	15-25°C	2-8°C	-20°C	Misc.	Instructions
TP	SST/RST/PST/Red top	6 days	1 month	1 year		
Triglyceride	SST/RST/Red top	2 days	10 days	3 months		
	PST		15 days			
Troponin T hs	SST/RST/PST/Red top		1 day	12 months		
TSH	SST/RST/PST/Red top		7 days	1 month		
UIBC	SST/RST/PST/Red top	4 days	7 days			
Uric Acid	SST/RST/PST/Red top	3 days	7 days	6 months		
Urea	SST/RST/PST/Red top	7 days	7 days	1 year		
Valproate	RST		5 days			
	Red top	2 days	7 days	3 months		
Vancomycin	RST/Red top		5 days			
Vitamin B12	SST/RST		7 days			Freeze only once
	Red top	2 hours		2 months		



Test	Sample Test	15-25°C	2-8°C	-20°C	Misc.	Instructions
Body Fluids						
CSF Glucose	CSF tube (no preservative)		8 hours	3 days		Centrifuge and separate supernatant. CSF samples should be analyzed immediately or store at 4°C or -20°C.
CSF Lactic Acid	CSF tube (no preservative)	3 hours	1 day	2 months		
CSF Protein	CSF tube (no preservative)	1 day	6 days	>1 year		
Urinalysis						
Urine	Urine (sterile, orange top container)	2 hours	8 hours			If urine is stored in the fridge, bring urine sample(s) to room temperature before testing (10-15 minutes).