

Special Specimen Collection Procedures for Endocrine Tests

The accuracy of endocrine testing depends upon the quality of the specimen submitted. Endocrine specimens must be properly collected, labeled, stored, packaged, and transported. Phlebotomists and specimen managers must carefully adhere to all time limits. Properly following these instructions will assure specimen integrity and contribute to valid, consistent endocrine results.

Prior to collecting the specimen, review the specimen requirements listed in the general menu section. Note the proper specimen type to be collected, amount of specimen necessary for testing and special storage and shipping instructions.

The specimen container must be properly identified with *the patient's full name, identification number, date and time of collection and specimen type.*

A properly completed request form must accompany each specimen. It is important that the age and/or birth date of the patient be indicated so that age-adjusted normal values can be provided.

CLIA regulations further require that signatures be provided for additional tests ordered or test changes not accompanying the original request form.

Salivary Cortisol

Saliva should be collected at the precise time(s) prescribed by your physician. Saliva specimens can be collected manually by spitting into a clean sample vial or with the aid of a Salivette. (The Salivette is a device made specifically for the purpose of collecting saliva specimens.) If not using a Salivette, be sure to collect at least 1 ml of saliva. Regardless of collection technique, please observe the following guidelines:

1. Collect saliva at the times prescribed by your physician
2. No food or fluid 30 minutes prior to collection
3. Do not apply creams or lotions that contain steroids or use steroid inhalers immediately prior to collection. (This is to avoid contamination of the Salivette or collection vial.)
4. Avoid activities that can cause your gums to bleed. This would include brushing or flossing your teeth
5. Do not collect and submit a sample if your gums or the inside of your mouth is bleeding. Consult with your Physician if this is a chronic problem. Blood in the saliva will invalidate the measurement of Salivary Cortisol
6. Carefully label the sample vial or Salivette with your name, your physician's name and the time and date of collection
7. Return the specimen to your physician or Esoterix's endocrinology services within one day of the collection

8. If necessary, salivation can be stimulated with citric acid crystals or with sugar-free KoolAid® powder

** Contact Client Service at (800) 444-9111 for specific Salivette instructions

Urine, 24-hour Collection

Most urine assays require a 24-hour specimen because of diurnal variations in excretion of many hormones. Patients should receive explicit instructions for obtaining a complete 24-hour urine sample. Start the 24-hour period at exactly 7:00 a.m. the first morning by voiding. Discard this first voiding since the urine was formed prior to the collection period. Collect all subsequent voidings until 7:00 a.m. the next day. At exactly 7:00 a.m. the second day, empty the bladder using this last voiding to complete the collection.

Refer to specimen requirements for each assay to determine the appropriate preservative. Patients should be given two containers and instructed to avoid direct contact with collection bottles or bags containing preservatives, especially hydrochloric acid. Measure and clearly record the 24-hour volume on the Test Request Form. Submit only the required aliquot of a well-mixed total collection.

*Contact Client Services at 800-444-9111
for questions regarding these procedures*