

General Specimen Handling for Clinical Chemistry

- **THE SUBMISSION OF A WHOLE CLOTTED UNSEPARATED SAMPLE IS GENERALLY UNSATISFACTORY FOR MOST BIOCHEMICAL TESTS.**
- Following clot retraction of the whole blood (allow 1 – 2 hours at room temperature), rim the tube with a wooden applicator stick, centrifuge, aspirate the serum by pipette or syringe and place into a separate red-stoppered tube or plastic screw capped shipping vial. Ensure that all red blood cells are removed to prevent hemolysis during shipping. Usually about 0.3 ml of serum can be obtained from each 1 ml of clotted blood. Additional centrifugation of the clot could yield additional serum if required. Label the separated sample as serum and submit fresh if delivery within 48 hours is possible or frozen if longer transit time is likely. Serum can ALWAYS be frozen and stored before shipment.
- When plasma samples are submitted they must be collected in proper vacutainers, such as heparin or sodium fluoride. Plasma is immediately separated by centrifugation, pipetted off and submitted in a red-stoppered tube or a plastic screw cap shipping vial. **IT IS IMPORTANT WHEN SEPARATING SERUM OR PLASMA TO LABEL THE SAMPLE ACCORDINGLY. STATE THE TYPE OF ANTICOAGULANT USED.**
- Any test requiring fresh frozen serum or plasma must be marked frozen on outside of the container and arrive in a frozen state.