

Sample Submission Guidelines

Print out these pages and display them prominently within your practice as a reminder of how best to store and submit samples for testing.



SEASONAL CONSIDERATIONS



Tips for Summer Shipments

Extreme heat can compromise sample integrity. Follow these guidelines to help maintain sample quality.



Do not place samples in lockboxes or outdoors until close to the sample pickup time.



Include ice packs for any refrigerated samples and consult the "Special Instructions" in the Directory of Services for any frozen sample shipping (dry ice may be required).



Multiple ice packs may be utilized when temperatures are 90 °F and above.



Wrap the ice pack in a paper towel or similar covering to avoid direct contact with the sample, which may cause the sample to freeze.



Tips for Winter Shipments

Extreme cold can compromise sample integrity. Unintentional freezing of samples can render them useless. Follow these guidelines to help maintain sample quality.



Do not place samples in lockboxes or outdoors until close to the sample pickup time.



Do not use a frozen ice pack in cold weather. Instead, use a cold (not frozen) soft gel ice pack, placing the pack around the samples. This will help ensure temperature distribution during transit, decreasing the likelihood of sample freezing.



In extremely cold weather, consider using a Styrofoam-insulated box for shipping.

SPECIMEN-SPECIFIC GUIDELINES



Core Lab Specimens

Includes whole blood, serum, plasma, urine, other liquid samples, and blood smears (slides).

- Following collection of Core Lab specimens, with the exception of prepared slides, refrigerate within 30 minutes. Keep refrigerated until sample pickup.
- Do not freeze samples unless expressly indicated in the Directory of Services (e.g., plasma for equine endogenous ACTH).
- If refrigerated samples are being shipped via UPS, include a frozen ice pack in the packaging. Wrap the ice pack in a paper towel or similar covering to avoid direct contact with the sample, which may cause the sample to freeze.
- For CBC submissions, we recommend making a blood smear at the time of sample collection. Store any prepared slides at room temperature. Refrigeration of glass slides causes condensation that can destroy the sample. Submit any prepared slides along with the sample tubes.
- Samples that must be shipped frozen require additional special handling. Consult the Directory of Services or contact Customer Service for specific shipping recommendations for these samples.



Parasitology Specimens

Feces

- Fecal specimens should be stored refrigerated and shipped with a frozen ice pack, as described above for Core Lab Specimens.



Be sure to follow all shipping protocols to avoid delays in transit.

Consider weekends and holidays when shipping samples, especially when specialized testing or frozen samples are being submitted.

SPECIMEN-SPECIFIC GUIDELINES



Microbiology Specimens

Includes culture swabs, liquid samples (e.g., urine), tissue, and feces.

- Culture swabs should be stored and shipped at room temperature.
 - Urine, feces, and tissue being submitted for culture should be stored refrigerated and shipped with a frozen ice pack, as described on the previous page for Core Lab Specimens.
 - [Click here](#) for additional guidance on Microbiology Specimens.
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Cytology Specimens

Includes customer-prepared slides and liquid samples.

- Store any prepared slides at room temperature. Refrigeration of glass slides causes condensation that can destroy the sample.
- For shipping cytology slides, we recommend using hard plastic slide boxes designed for this purpose. Ensure all slides have completely air-dried before packaging. DO NOT enclose slides in slide boxes prior to drying, as this can damage the sample due to humidity.
- Avoid shipping any cytology slides or liquid samples inside packaging that also contains any form of formalin. Fumes can escape from closed formalin containers or liquid formalin can leak en route. Both formalin fumes and liquid formalin can destroy a cytology slide.
- Any liquid samples (e.g., cavitory effusion, CSF) should be stored refrigerated and shipped with a frozen ice pack, as described on the previous page for Core Lab Specimens.
- If a liquid cytology sample is intended for cytological examination, an EDTA tube is recommended. If a liquid cytology sample is also intended for culture, an additional sterile, no-additive tube aliquot should be submitted.
- We recommend making a direct fluid smear preparation at the time of sample collection of any liquid specimens. Submit any prepared slides with the sample tubes of liquid samples.
- [Click here](#) for additional guidance on Cytopathology Specimens.

SPECIMEN-SPECIFIC GUIDELINES



Histology Specimens

Includes biopsies — formalin-fixed and fresh tissue.

Formalin-fixed tissue

- Always place tissues in 10% neutral buffered formalin to ensure appropriate fixation. A 10:1 formalin to tissue ratio is recommended.
- In extreme cold, add isopropyl or ethyl alcohol to your formalin jars (1 part alcohol to 10 parts formalin) to prevent freezing. Note alcohol added on container or in submission notes. Ship in an insulated shipping container and include room temperature soft gel ice packs.
- In extreme heat, submit samples inside an insulated shipping container with frozen ice packs.

Fresh tissue

- In extreme cold, submit samples in an insulated shipping container and include cold (not frozen) soft gel ice packs.
- In extreme heat, submit samples in an insulated shipping container with frozen ice packs.
- [Click here](#) for additional guidance on Histology Specimens.

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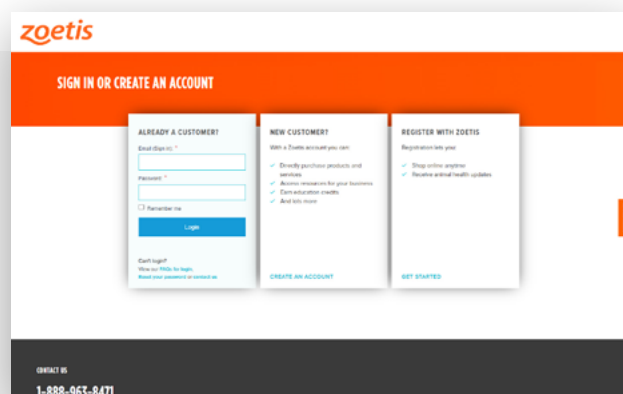
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