

Monthly Serum Samples

While you are on the waiting list for a kidney and/or pancreas transplant, you **must** send blood samples to the transplant lab. These samples are **different** from your other regular labs.

If you do not send in your monthly samples, you may miss your chance for a transplant. You may also be switched to inactive on the waiting list until we have a current sample.

Antibody Testing

The lab will test your blood to look for antibodies. Antibodies can attack your new organ. Knowing if you have antibodies helps us decide which organs are right for you. These samples are stored by the lab and are ready to be used when an organ becomes available.

Collection Schedule

- **Monthly:** You can collect samples any day of the month but avoid sending the week before a long holiday, if you can.
- **After blood transfusions:** You will also need to send a blood sample 2 weeks after any blood transfusion.

Instructions for Inactive Patients

Most patients who are inactive on the waiting list do not need to send in monthly blood samples. You only need to send in a blood sample if you expect to be on the waitlist soon or if your care team told you to.

Check Expiration Dates

Check the expiration date on the tube. The expiration date is also listed on the outside mailer box in MMDDYY format. If tubes are expired, ask the lab for a new tube. If a replacement tube can be provided and drawn, label and send it using the (expired) kit/mailer box. If a new tube cannot be provided, throw away the entire kit. If expired kits are thrown away, contact your coordinator to send new kits.

Storing Kits

Store kits at home. **Do not** store kits at your dialysis center. The outside of each box has a barcode specific to you. We don't want your kit to be confused with another patients. When needed, take **one** kit to be drawn.

Once you have received your transplant, you can throw away your leftover kits.

Getting More Supplies

Each kit is scanned when it is received by the lab. The kit supplier will send you more kits when their records show you have **one** kit left and you are still on the waiting list.

Send **one** blood sample back per box, per month. **Do not** let other patients use your kits. If you do, we will not know how many you have left. This may affect your future supplies.

Shipping Your Sample

The box has pre-paid postage so you can just drop it in the mail. You do not need any stamps. If your kit has FedEx supplies, please return using FedEx.

U.S. Postal Service Shipping Guidelines

Blood specimens used to monitor pre-transplant HLA antibody levels are **exempt human specimens**. They are considered **low risk** because these are transported for routine testing and are not related to the diagnosis of an infectious disease.

For a standard blood specimen, the kit you are given by UW Health can be used.

- **Outer box:** The outer box requires the address label and must be marked **“Exempt Human Specimen”**. You **do not** need to put a biohazard label or other stickers on the outer box. Doing so could delay delivery.
- **Inner container:** You must include the biohazard warning on the inner container. If you are being treated for an infectious disease, you may need other materials. These materials are **not** included in your kits.

How to Label Your Tube

Tube label **must** include:

1. **Patient’s full name AND**
2. **UW Health Medical Record number**
OR
Birth date
3. **Date blood drawn**

Steps for Lab for Collecting Sample

1. Pick a serum tube with a red top with yellow ring (SST). You may also use a plain red top serum tube.
2. If you can, spin SST tube to separate serum. Or, if you are using a plain red top, take serum off the cells.
3. Label tube. Use the supplied pre-printed label.
4. Insert the sample and an absorbent mat into the plastic biohazard bag you were given. Seal the bag.
5. Insert the bagged sample into the pre-labeled cardboard mailer box you were given.
6. Samples will last for up to 8 days at room temperature before they expire.

When to Call

Call your transplant coordinator or the HLA lab if:

- A tube breaks.
- You throw away a kit.
- You lose any of your kits.

They will update the number of kits you need. If you have questions about your sample, call the lab.

Disclaimer: This information is based on the UW Health interpretation of new regulations and is intended for use with containers supplied for blood collection from UW Health patients. Readers are urged to consult their own legal advisors for interpretation of laws and regulations that apply to their own organizations.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person’s health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 10/2025 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing HF#8291.