

How to store test samples

Guidance for GPs on how to store samples and how long samples can be stored before testing.

For full details see the individual department's user guide.

Department	Sample type	Storage requirements
Biochemistry	Urines	Suitable for overnight refrigeration only. They must not be stored over a weekend. Urine urate must be stored at room temperature.
Biochemistry	Bloods	All samples must arrive on the day of collection. Samples must not be stored overnight as analytes are affected differently by refrigeration and/or room temperature storage.
Haematology	Bloods	Ideally all samples must arrive on the day of collection. MCV and ESR results will be invalid if stored by refrigeration overnight. Coagulation samples are not suitable for overnight refrigeration. Plasma viscosity samples must be stored overnight at room temperature only.
Immunology	Urines	Suitable for overnight refrigeration only, they must not be stored over a weekend.
Immunology	Bloods	All samples with the exception of CD4s immunophenotyping (EDTA tubes) are suitable for overnight refrigeration only, they must not be stored over a weekend.
Microbiology and Virology	Bloods and urines	All samples are suitable for overnight refrigeration only, they must not be stored over a weekend.
Histopathology and Cytology	-	All samples can be left at room temperature overnight only, they must not be stored over a weekend.