

**WAYCROSS PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY
912-338-7050**

INTRODUCTION

The Waycross Public Health Laboratory is a multi-functional clinical public health laboratory which operates under the Public Health Division of the Georgia Department of Public Health. The laboratory is located at 1751 Gus Karle Parkway in Waycross, Georgia with Dr. E. A. Franko serving as the Laboratory Director. It is licensed by the State of Georgia and the Federal Government under the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Act of 1988 (CLIA).

The laboratory performs tests mandated by state laws as well as those examinations required to support the State of Georgia's public health programs. These services are available free of charge to county health departments and units of the Department of Public Health. Services are also available on a limited basis to the private sector customers and may be subject to a nominal fee. The following pages describe the examinations available at the Waycross Public Health Laboratory with specific requirements for specimen collection and handling for each test category. Included also, are expected turn-around times for reports, specimen acceptance policies, and guidelines for interpretation of reported results.

Specimen collection outfits are provided free of charge for those services performed in the Waycross Public Health Laboratory and may be ordered using the Specimen Collection Outfit order form.

For additional information contact:
Waycross Public Health Laboratory
1751 Gus Karle Parkway
Waycross, Georgia 31503
Telephone: 912-338-7050

CHLAMYDIA/GONORRHEA 912-338-7050

INTRODUCTION

Chlamydia trachomatis is the most common treatable sexually transmitted infection affecting females of reproductive age in the United States today, with an estimated three million new cases each year. The majority of infected females have few or no symptoms, and asymptomatic infection in females can persist for up to 15 months. Women are frequently re-infected if their sex partners are not treated. Complications of untreated chlamydial infection in females include: acute pelvic inflammatory disease; ectopic pregnancy; chronic pelvic pain; and infertility.

Neisseria gonorrhoeae affects males and females from symptoms of purulent discharge in males, a few days after exposure, to very mild symptoms in females. Symptoms may pass unnoticed with a consequence that asymptomatic carriers contribute significantly to the public health problem of gonorrhea.

The Waycross Public Health Laboratory uses Target-amplified direct nucleic acid amplification test for chlamydia and gonorrhea. The Dual Kinetic Assay (DKA) measures Relative Light Units by using the chemiluminescent kinetic profiles of CT and GC labeled probes which allow for the differentiation of photon signals.

SPECIMEN COLLECTION/LABELING/REQUISITION FORM

The APTIMA Combo 2 Assay is designed to detect the presence of *C. trachomatis* and *N. gonorrhoeae* in the following specimens: endocervical and male urethral specimens, and in female and male urine specimens.

Only the swabs and the specimen transport tubes contained in the APTIMA Unisex Swab Specimen Collection Kit for Endocervical and Urethral Swab Specimens can be used to collect patient swab specimens. A unisex swab is used for both male and female specimens. Swab specimens must be transported to the laboratory in the swab specimen transport medium and tube. Swab specimens must be transported to the laboratory at 2°C to 30°C and tested within 60 days of collection.

Urine specimens must be transferred into the GEN-PROBE specimen transport tube within 24 hours of collection and before being assayed. Urine specimens can be transported to the laboratory at 2° to 30°C in the urine specimen transport tube provided in the urine specimen collection kit. The fluid (urine plus transport media) level in the urine transport tube must fall within the clear pane on the tube label. After transfer, urine specimens can be stored at 2° to 30°C for up to 30 days after collection.

Use the Gen-Probe collection kits supplied by the District or County services and supply representative.

CLIENT TESTING CRITERIA:

- **Family Planning Clinics:** All females age 29 years or younger who receive a pelvic exam during a visit (initial, annual or comprehensive medical only) will be screened for chlamydia. A female will only be screened once per calendar year for chlamydia unless she has clinical signs or symptoms of chlamydia (cervicitis/MPC, friable cervix, cervical ectopy, abdominal pain, abnormal bleeding, dyspareunia or dysuria) or a new sex partner or multiple sex partners in the past 60 days. All females 30 years and older who meet these criteria will also be screened for chlamydia.
- **STD/General Clinics:** All females age 10-29, who receive a pelvic exam during a visit, will be screened for chlamydia. This includes rescreening females who are returning for medical problems, receiving more than one pelvic exam a year and/or are currently on antibiotics. All females 30 years and older who present with clinical signs or symptoms of chlamydia (cervicitis/MPC, friable cervix, cervical ectopy, abdominal pain, abnormal bleeding, dyspareunia or dysuria) or have a new sex partner or multiple sex partners in the past 60 days will also be screened for chlamydia. Male clients presenting for services should also be screened for chlamydia.
- **Teen Clinics:** All females who receive a pelvic exam will be screened for chlamydia. This includes rescreening females who are returning for medical problems, receiving more than one pelvic exam a year and/or are currently on antibiotics. Males should also be screened.

All female/male clients screened for chlamydia will also be screened for gonorrhea.

Females with cervical stenosis should be included in the chlamydia/gonorrhea screening.

If the client does not have a cervix, she will not be included in the chlamydia screening.

SPECIMEN COLLECTION:

Endocervical swab specimens

1. Remove excess mucus from the cervical opening and surrounding mucosa using the cleaning swab (white shaft swab in the package with red printing). Discard this swab. Note: To remove excess mucus from the cervical opening, a large-tipped cleaning swab (not provided) may be used. Discard the swab after use.
2. Insert the specimen collection swab (blue shaft swab in the package with green printing) into the endocervical canal.
3. Gently rotate the swab clockwise for 10 to 30 seconds in the endocervical canal to ensure adequate sampling.
4. Withdraw the swab carefully; avoid any contact with the vaginal mucosa.
5. Remove the cap from the swab specimen transport tube and immediately place the specimen collection swab into the transport tube.
6. Carefully break the swab shaft at the score line; avoid splashing the contents.

7. Recap the swab specimen transport tube tightly. Legibly label tube with patient name, patient ID# and date of collection. Unlabeled specimens will not be tested.

Male urethral swab specimens

Note: The patient should not have urinated for at least one hour prior to specimen collection.

1. Insert the specimen collection swab (blue shaft swab in the package with the green printing) 2 to 4 cm into the urethra.
2. Gently rotate the swab clockwise for 2 to 3 seconds in the urethra to ensure adequate sampling.
3. Withdraw the swab carefully.
4. Remove the cap from the swab specimen transport tube and immediately place the specimen collection swab into the specimen transport tube.
5. Carefully break the swab shaft at the score line; avoid splashing the contents.
6. Recap the swab specimen transport tube tightly.
7. Legibly label tube with patient name, patient ID# and date of collection. Unlabeled specimens will not be tested.

Urine Specimens

The patient should not have urinated for at least one hour prior to specimen collection.

Direct the patient to provide a first-catch urine (approximately 20 to 30 mL of the initial urine stream) into a urine collection cup which is free of any preservatives. Collection of larger volumes of urine may result in specimen dilution that may reduce test sensitivity. Female patients should not cleanse the labial area prior to providing the specimen.

1. Remove the cap and transfer 2 mL of urine into the urine specimen transport tube using the disposable pipette provided. The correct volume of urine has been added when the fluid level is between the black fill lines on the urine transport tube label.
2. Recap the urine specimen transport tube tightly. This specimen is now referred to as the processed urine specimen. Legibly label tube with patient name, patient ID# and date of collection. Unlabeled specimens will not be tested.

Requisition Form

Use the Chlamydia and Gonorrhea requisition form #3568 .

Fill out the form completely by printing or typing legibly. Only legible information can be entered correctly into the laboratory database. Incomplete or illegible information may delay your results. Do not use computer-generated labels for patient information.

Information required is as follows:

- a. Submitter information (submitter code, submitter address, and phone number).
- b. Patient information (name, patient ID number, county of residence, zip code, State, race, ethnicity, gender, date of birth).
- c. Specimen information (test requested, reason for test, date collected, source of specimen, specimen status).

Tear off the top section of form (white copy) and mail to the laboratory with the specimen, making sure the names on the specimen and form are exact matches. Retain the other two copies of the form (pink and yellow) for clinic and program use.

Chlamydia and Gonorrhea Laboratory Submission forms should be ordered as indicated by the STD Program Office.

SHIPMENT OF SPECIMENS

For best results, specimens should be transported to the laboratory on the date of collection; however, if this is impossible, specimens may be kept at room temperature and shipped as soon as possible. Urine specimens over 30 days old and/ or swab specimens over 60 days old at the time of arrival in the laboratory will be reported unsatisfactory.

Chlamydia/Gonorrhea APTIMA Combo 2 specimens may be transported at room temperature. Use the specimen transport cans and Waycross address labels (available from the laboratory).

1. Be sure the caps on the transport tubes are secure, and wrap each specimen in absorbent packing material. Place the wrapped specimen inside the aluminum can, and close the can securely.
2. Wrap the completed requisition form around the aluminum can and secure it with a rubber band.
3. Place the aluminum can inside the labeled (Wacycross address) fiberboard can, close, and secure the lid with tape. An alternate shipping method may be utilized by substituting the biohazard bag for the inner aluminum container. If this method is chosen, the matching requisition forms should be placed in the pouch located in the front of each bag.

Specimens may be mailed or shipped by the method most convenient and expedient.

REPORTING AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

The goal of the Bacteriology Unit is to test and report all Chlamydia/Gonorrhea APTIMA Combo 2 specimens within a 3 days turnaround period, unless confirmation testing is required. An electronic copy of all positive Chlamydia and Gonorrhea reports is transmitted to the State Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Program. A hard copy of all positives is also mailed to the State STD Surveillance Office.

Results are reported as follows:

Positive = Positive for *C. trachomatis* and/or *N. gonorrhoeae* rRNA was detected in the specimen, and as indicated by Aptima Combo 2 Assay.

Negative = Presumed negative for *C. trachomatis* and/or *N. gonorrhoeae* rRNA.

Equivocal = Indeterminate, a new specimen should be collected.

Unsatisfactory = Specimen compromised in some manner making it unsatisfactory for testing. The reason for each unsatisfactory result will be listed on the report form.

UNACCEPTABLE SPECIMENS

Specimens will be reported unsatisfactory for the following reasons:

1. No patient identifier on the specimen, or discrepancy between identifier on the specimen and requisition form.
2. Source other than urine, cervix or male urethra.
3. Two swabs received in the collection outfit.
4. No solution in the collection outfit.
5. No swab, or improper swab (not from Gen-Probe kit) in the collection outfit.
6. Urine specimens over 30 days old and/ or swab specimens over 60 days old from date of collection when received.
7. Collection kit expired.
8. No specimen received.

Medical/legal specimens (Aptima Combo 2 is not intended for medical/legal cases).

INTESTINAL PARASITES

912-338-7050

INTRODUCTION

Stool specimens may be submitted for examination for intestinal parasites by county health departments and for confirmation purposes by the private sector. There is only a minimal charge for this service and for the collection outfit. The current tests performed at the Waycross Public Health Laboratory to detect intestinal parasites include a Formalin ethyl acetate concentration, a Kinyoun acid-fast stain and a Trichrome stained PVA permanent slide on each specimen.

SPECIMEN COLLECTION/LABELING/REQUISITION FORM

Each collection outfit kit contains two unbreakable plastic vials, each having a color-coded cap and label, a clearly marked "fill to here" line, and a built-in collection spoon in the screw cap top. The kit systems are packaged in ziplock bags with illustrated, multilingual patient instructions to assist in safe and sanitary specimen collection by personnel and/or patients. A biohazard bag for secure transportation to the laboratory completes the outfit.

Health Department Instructions

1. Collection instructions should be reviewed with the patient.
2. It should be stressed to the patient that each specimen must be properly identified with the patient's name. Unidentified or misidentified specimens will not be tested.
3. It should be made clear to the patient that multiple specimens collected on the same day will be considered unsatisfactory.
4. Patient should bring the specimen back to the Health Department upon completion.

Patient Instructions

1. Remove IP/PVA vials from ziplock bags and collect fecal specimens as directed by instructions included in outfit.
2. Carefully label each vial with the patient's name.
3. Replace only the vials in original ziplock bag.
4. Place ziplock bag inside biohazard bag and seal.

Requisition Form

Health Department Instructions:

1. Fill in submitter return address in proper area on form #3414.
2. Instruct patient in the correct manner to complete remainder of form.

Patient Instructions:

1. Complete Form #3414 as directed.
2. Fold form in half and place in outside pouch of biohazard bag.

3. Return the outfit to the Health Department for transportation to the Waycross Public Health Laboratory.

SHIPMENT OF SPECIMENS

The specimen vials correctly placed and sealed within the provided ziplock bag within the biohazard bag may be carried by courier or mailed in a sturdy fiber board box which meets U.S. postal regulations to:

Waycross Public Health Laboratory
1751 Gus Karle Parkway
Waycross, Georgia 31503

REPORTING AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

Submitters may expect to have test results reported within two to three working days after receipt in the laboratory.

The following results are reported:

1. No parasites found;
2. A specific parasite found

Note: Reported parasites are classed as pathogenic or nonpathogenic.

3. Unsatisfactory results indicate that the specimen was compromised in a way that might render the test results invalid. The reason for the unsatisfactory report is indicated on each form.

UNACCEPTABLE SPECIMENS

Specimens will be reported unsatisfactory for the following reasons.

1. Overfilled;
2. Quantity not sufficient;
3. No preservative in bottle;
4. Leaked or broken in transit;
5. Expired outfit;
6. More than one specimen collected on same day;
7. No specimen received;
8. Non-fecal material received;
9. No specimen in bottle;
10. Specimen unidentified.

PINWORMS
912-338-7050

INTRODUCTION

The female *Enterobius* (Pinworm) leaves the intestinal tract to lay her eggs in the area surrounding the anus. For this reason, *Enterobius* (Pinworm) ova are not often present in detectable numbers within fecal specimens. The outfit best suited for the detection of pinworm infections consists of a clear, plastic tape and glass slide outfit. This outfit is designed for the direct collection of the eggs from around the anal area upon the awakening of the patient and the transportation of the specimen to the laboratory for examination. Please note that this examination is satisfactory only for detection of *Enterobius* (Pinworms) and no other intestinal parasites.

SPECIMEN COLLECTION/LABELING/ REQUISITION FORM

Each collection outfit kit contains collection instructions, a glass slide with clear plastic tape, a tongue blade, a labeled cardboard slide holder, and requisition form # 3414.

Health Department Instructions:

1. Collection instructions should be carefully reviewed with the collector.
2. It should be stressed to the collector that each specimen must be properly identified with the patient's name. Unidentified or misidentified specimens will not be tested.
3. It should be made clear to the collector that multiple specimens collected on the same day will be considered unsatisfactory.

Collection Instructions:

1. Collect the specimen immediately upon patient's awakening in the morning since the eggs may be lost later during the day as a result of scratching, bowel movements or bathing.
2. Place the round end of tongue blade at middle of the slide. Hold the slide near center with one hand; grasp the blade and white tab on end of tape with the other hand.
3. Rotate slide while lifting up on blade and tape.
4. Continue to rotate slide until one half of tape is stripped from it.
5. Turn the slide back over tongue blade and grasp other tab with thumb.
6. Strip tape completely off slide.
7. Spread the buttocks apart to expose the anus and press the tape firmly against each side at the level of the zone between the moist anal canal and dry skin surrounding it.
8. Replace tape and tongue blade on slide.
9. Smooth tape down with tongue blade.
10. Place slide in holder and discard tongue blade.
11. Label cardboard slide holder with patient's name.

Requisition Form

Health Department Instructions

1. Fill in submitter return address in proper area on the form #3414.
2. Instruct patient in the correct manner to complete remainder of form.
3. Indicate type of specimen submitted (for example, Pinworm slide)

Patient Instructions

1. Complete Form #3414 as directed.
2. Fold form in half and wrap around the slide holder securing with rubber band before placing in mailing envelope.

SHIPMENT OF SPECIMEN

The specimen may be returned to the health department or after attaching proper amount of postage mailed to:

Waycross Public Health Laboratory
1751 Gus Karle Parkway
Waycross, Georgia 31503

REPORTING AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

Submitters may expect to have test results reported within 1 to 2 working days after receipt in the laboratory.

The following results are reported:

1. No parasites found;
2. Enterobius (Pinworm);
3. Unsatisfactory results indicate that the specimen was compromised in a way that might render the test results invalid. The reason for the unsatisfactory report is indicated on each form.

UNACCEPTABLE SPECIMENS

Specimens will be reported unsatisfactory for the following reasons:

1. No specimen on tape;
2. Crushed in transit;
3. Cream or powder on tape;
4. More than one specimen collected on the same day;
5. No specimen received;
6. Excess Feces on tape;
7. Specimen unidentified or misidentified;
8. Frosted tape used instead of clear plastic tape.

RABIES
912-338-7050

INTRODUCTION

The goal of the Waycross Public Health Laboratory is to confidently report an accurate and reliable diagnosis so that rabies treatment can be initiated if necessary. The Laboratory currently uses Fluorescent Antibody (FA) methodology, the most accurate microscopic test available for the diagnosis of rabies. One vitally important factor in obtaining accurate results is the quality of the specimen received. The importance of rabies diagnosis makes it imperative that the condition or identity of the specimen not be compromised.

SPECIMEN COLLECTION/LABELING/REQUISITION FORM

1. Only specimens received in good condition with at least two identifiable principal brain parts are approved for reporting.
2. In all cases, there must have been exposure of human or domestic animals to the suspected rabid animal.
3. The Waycross Public Health Laboratory is not equipped to handle whole carcasses; therefore, only the **heads** of animals are accepted except for bats or small rodents. Bats or small rodents should be submitted whole.

Environmentalists should follow these instructions for the removal of animal heads:

- a. Rubber gloves and protective clothing as well as face and eye protection should be worn while the head is being removed and packaged.
 - b. Sever neck so as not to damage the skull. Local veterinarians can assist in this removal. Never advise clients to remove animal heads!
 - c. Allow fluids and blood to drain from the head, and keep head as clean as possible. Place head in a double plastic bag for transportation to the laboratory. Leak proof.
 - d. If fleas or ticks are in evidence, spray insecticide into the plastic bag containing the head before closing.
 - e. Gloves should be cleaned and disinfected or discarded following use and cutting surfaces should be carefully cleaned and disinfected.
4. Only brain material (not the entire head) of very large animals (cows or horses) will be accepted, as the laboratory is not equipped to handle these large heads due to limited hood and sterilizer space. Veterinarians should be requested to perform this necropsy procedure.
 5. Rodents or rabbits are **not** accepted for laboratory examination-unless the animal attacks a person unprovoked. Bites from animals that constitute no risk from rabies

are hamster, guinea pigs, gerbils and white mice that are obtained directly from pet shops and have never been exposed to carnivorous animals or bats.

6. Reporting will be delayed on specimens that are received frozen. If specimens cannot be delivered to the laboratory immediately, refrigerate, but do not freeze.

Requisition Form

One Rabies History/Report Form #3062 should accompany each specimen for rabies examination. This form provides the laboratory with the needed information for accurate results.

Fill out the form completely and legibly, being careful to include accurate addresses and telephone numbers for reporting. A copy of each Rabies report is forwarded to the State Office of Epidemiology for review and date of collection.

SHIPMENT OF SPECIMENS

Notify the Waycross Public Health Laboratory of the shipment or expected arrival of all rabies specimens so that tracking can be initiated immediately on those which become misdirected.

1. Properly package the specimen by placing the severed animal head in a double plastic bag and secure the bag by twisting and knotting. For bats and rodents, do not remove heads, but submit the whole animal.
2. Place the bag containing the specimen into a shipper with wet ice. **DO NOT USE DRY ICE!** Seal the shipper. Place the completed history form in a separate plastic bag, and tape to the lid of the sealed shipper. Place the shipper in a cardboard box, tape, and address for shipment.
3. The package should be shipped prepaid to the laboratory. Use the method of shipment that will assure prompt service.
4. Any bite case in which the history reveals a strong probability of rabies should be handled with utmost speed. Hand deliver such specimens to the laboratory after calling ahead to inform the laboratory manager of the emergency situation and the estimated time of arrival.
5. Do not ship specimens on the weekends unless prior approval has been obtained from the lab manager.

REPORTING AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

1. Rabies testing is available Monday through Friday excluding official state holidays. Due to the required period of tissue fixation, reports will be issued the day following the receipt of the specimen. Reporting will be delayed on specimens that are received frozen.

Note: Specimens involved in emergency situations, and Monday and Friday morning specimens will receive only four hours of fixation; and reports will be issued the same day if received by 10:00. Otherwise, reporting will be next day or following the weekend.

2. If the brain material found inside the skull is decomposed or damaged to the point of uncertainty about its being brain tissue, no slides will be prepared unless human exposure to the suspected rabid animal is involved.
 - a. **No Exposure** – Reported “Unsatisfactory” and comment is made "Test requires at least two identifiable brain parts."
 - b. **Exposure** - Routine testing is performed. If the test result is positive, a report is issued as positive. If the test result is Negative, a report of Unsatisfactory is made and the comment "Test requires at least two identifiable brain parts" is added.
3. All Rabies reports are telephoned immediately to the submitter listed on the history form. Copies of all reports are mailed to the submitter, County Environmentalist (county of the animal) and to the State Epidemiology Office.
4. Test results may be given to concerned individuals, such as owners of animals, persons bitten, etc.

UNACCEPTABLE SPECIMENS

Rabies specimens will be reported as Unsatisfactory for the following reasons:

1. There is no documented exposure to humans or domestic animals.
2. Brain tissue is damaged or decomposed beyond recognition of at least two principal parts.
3. Tissue in preservative, such as formalin.

Note: See #2 under Reporting/Interpretation Section above.

SYPHILIS
912-338-7050

INTRODUCTION

All serologic services provided by the Waycross Public Health Laboratory are available to both the public and private sector customers.

Currently the Rapid Plasma Reagin (RPR) 18mm Circle Card Test (a nontreponemal test) is the screening procedure for the diagnosis of syphilis. All reactive RPR tests will be confirmed by the Enzyme Immunoassay (EIA) unless the requisition form is marked "No Confirmatory Test Needed." The fluorescent Treponemal Antibody-Absorption Double Staining (FTS-ABS DS) test will be performed only on specimens when the EIA results are equivocal, or the RPR results are reactive 1:16 or greater with a negative EIA.

SPECIMEN COLLECTION/LABELING/REQUISITION FORM

For routine testing, whole blood from a venipuncture or serum transferred to a clean, leak resistant, non-breakable tube may be used.

Note: Plasma is not approved for use.

1. No special preparation for the patient is required prior to specimen collection.
2. Using Universal Precautions and standard venipuncture technique collect approximately five (5) milliliters of blood in a plain (no additive) redtop vacuum blood collection tube. Use appropriate size needle (large enough to prevent hemolysis of the red blood cells) for the vein location and age of the patient.
3. Properly label with patient identifier (name, first and last, or number), collection date, and name of submitter. Use a waterproof marker that will not fade, smear, or run during transportation.
4. Allow blood specimen to clot undisturbed at room temperature for 20-30 minutes before transporting or storing.

Requisition Form

Legibly complete laboratory requisition form GDCH #3432 (Rev. 4/200) in full providing:

1. Unique patient identifier (name);
2. Tests requested;
3. Race, sex, and date of birth;
4. Collection date;
5. Complete and accurate mailing address of submitter; and

6. Any information the submitter needs for patient identification, e.g., chart number, address.

NOTE: For those specimens requiring EIA regardless of RPR result, mark confirmatory testing required section of GDCH #3432 (Rev. 4/2000).

SHIPMENT OF SPECIMENS

In order to expedite the testing of all of the blood samples, and to insure the integrity of the sample, all specimens should be sent to the Waycross Public Health Laboratory on the day of collection.

1. Transport specimens using the doubled-walled mailing containers (aluminum can or biohazard bag and cardboard mailer provided by the Waycross Public Health Laboratory) or package in a cardboard box using U. S. postal regulations.
2. Wrap each specimen with absorbent material to cushion it from breakage or in case of breakage, to absorb the leakage.
3. Place wrapped specimen in aluminum container or biohazard bag.
4. Wrap the requisition form around the aluminum container or place in pocket of biohazard bag and place in either of the following:
 - a. **The outer cardboard mailer** with the Waycross Public Health Laboratory address. Reinforce the metal cover of the can with tape around the circumferential seam. To aid the laboratory in removing the tape, please do not use reinforced tape.
 - b. **A cardboard box sealed with plastic tape** with a Waycross Public Health Laboratory label. Labels are available from Waycross Public Health Laboratory (912) 338-7050. U.S. postal regulations allow up to 50 ml of blood to be transported in one package.
5. Transport specimen **promptly** to the laboratory. When mailing is delayed, refrigerate at 2-8° C pending transport.
6. Transport by U.S. mail, or courier.

NOTE: If U.S. mail is used, precautions should be taken that specimens are put in mail boxes that have a daily pick-up.

7. While refrigeration during transport is not necessary, avoid exposure to extreme temperatures and avoid mailing over long weekends and holidays.

INTERPRETATION AND REPORTING OF RESULTS

Turn-around-time for a RPR specimen is same day if received by 9:00 am, otherwise testing and reporting will be next business day. Arrangements may be made however, for "special request specimens," that are received after 9:00 am for same-day testing and reporting.

Results will be reported as follows:

RPR

Nonreactive	negative RPR test
Reactive	positive RPR test
Titer	Endpoint (highest dilution giving a reactive result)
Unsatisfactory	Specimen was compromised in a way that might render the test results invalid. The reason for the unsatisfactory report will be indicated on each requisition form.

NOTE: All reactive RPR specimens will be confirmed by the EIA or FTA-ABS DS test unless the requisition form is marked "NO CONFIRMATORY TEST NEEDED." RPR test is performed on all specimens submitted for EIA and/or FTA.

CONFIRMATORY EIA

Nonreactive	Negative EIA (tested by FTA-ABS DS if greater than 1:16)
Equivocal	+/- EIA (IF specimen if repeatedly equivocal, it will be tested by FTA-ABS DS)
Reactive	Positive EIA
Unsatisfactory	Specimen was compromised in a way that might render the test results invalid. The reason for the unsatisfactory report will be indicated on each requisition form.

FTA-ABS DS

Nonreactive	Negative FTA-ABS DS
Minimal Reactive	Weakly positive FTA-ABS DS (1+ fluorescence)
Reactive	Positive FTA-ABS DS (2+ - 4+ fluorescence)
Unsatisfactory	Specimen was compromised in a way that might render the test results invalid. The reason for the unsatisfactory report will be indicated on each requisition form.

NOTE: The FTA-ABS DS will be performed on all specimens when the EIA test results are equivocal, or the RPR results are reactive 1:16 or greater with a negative EIA.

UNACCEPTABLE SPECIMENS

The Waycross Public Health Laboratory specimen acceptance policy requires that all specimens must be properly labeled with unique patient identifier (name) with matching identifier on requisition form, in acceptable testing condition, and accompanied by a completed requisition form. Failure to provide proper patient information may result in testing/reporting delays. Plasma is not approved for many procedures. Therefore, submit only one venous blood or serum sample without anticoagulants.

In order to expedite testing and to insure the integrity of the sample, all specimens should be mailed or delivered to the Waycross Public Health Laboratory on the day of collection. If kept refrigerated at 2-8° C until ready for transport, specimens can be tested satisfactorily for 14 days before the red blood cells lyse to the extent that tests cannot be accurately interpreted.

The submitter will be notified of all specimens unacceptable for testing with the reason for the unsatisfactory report indicated on the requisition form. When possible, the unacceptable specimen will be held in the refrigerator for 14 days. At the end of 14 days the specimen will be discarded without further notification.

Specimens will be reported “No Test – Unsatisfactory for Testing” for the following reasons:

1. No patient identifier on specimen (first and last name must be legible);
2. Discrepancy between identifier on specimen and identifier on requisition form;
3. Insufficient quantity for testing;
4. Specimen broken or leaked in transit;
5. Specimen grossly hemolyzed, lipemic, turbid or contaminated; and
6. Plasma samples.