



Department of Pathology & Laboratory Medicine | Handling Considerations

Universal Standard Precautions apply to all specimens of blood, serum, plasma, blood products, vaginal secretions, semen, cerebrospinal fluid, synovial fluid, pleural fluid, peritoneal fluid, pericardial fluid, amniotic fluid, and concentrated HIV or HBV viruses. Any specimen of any type containing visible traces of blood should be handled using Universal Precautions.

Serum and plasma are the most commonly used specimens in Chemistry procedures. Serum is the intercellular fluid in blood without clotting factors. Serum is prepared by centrifuging clotted blood. This means that whole blood specimens must be allowed to clot before the serum can be separated. Thirty minutes to an hour is usually required before centrifugation.