

Turnaround Time (TAT)

Turnaround time is defined as the usual amount of time between the time a specimen is received within the laboratory and the result is available. Delays in analysis or reporting will be communicated to the physician, patient care unit or the client office. In order to better communicate physician and patient needs and to minimize blood volume drawn, the following order priorities are available for inpatient services.

Test Order Priorities

CHART 7AM	Results are requested to be "On Chart by 7AM".
TODAY	If ordered before 1PM, results should be available by 4PM.
NEXT LIST	Test will be scheduled for the next collection list. Results available within 2-3 hours of laboratory order.
TIMED	Test will be scheduled for the requested time and collected within 30 minutes (before or after) of the scheduled time.
*STAT	The test sample should be collected and results available within 1 hour of laboratory order. *STAT testing should be limited to critical patient needs.

*Methodologies of certain lab assays require batch testing and are performed on 1st and 2nd shifts only. These test(s) may require pathologist approval for STAT priority.

Turnaround Time Outreach Laboratory Services

Test results performed in-house are reported, excluding batch tests, the same day or following day dependent upon the time specimens are received within the laboratory.

STAT Testing - Our goal is to have STAT results available within two hours from the time the specimen is received within the laboratory. **STAT testing should be limited to critical patient needs.**

Add-On Testing

Additional testing may be ordered for or "added on" to a previously submitted specimen provided there is sufficient specimen volume and the request is made within the timeframe of specimen stability. A written physician order is required for additional testing for outpatient specimens along with the appropriate ICD-9 codes and medical necessity verification. Contact our client services department at (704) 834-2881 or fax add-on test request to (704) 834-2154.

Specimen Storage

All sera and fluids of sufficient volume are refrigerated and stored for 4 days. Stored specimens are racked and available for additional testing as needed. Random urine samples are held for 24 hours before discard. Twenty-four hour urine specimens are aliquoted and stored frozen for 2 weeks.

Non-Staff Physicians

Verification of licensure and review of Office of Inspector General (OIG) sanctions is performed on all physicians and authorized providers who are not on the medical staff of CaroMont Health who submit outpatient laboratory orders.

Verbal Orders

Verbal orders are accepted but must be authenticated with a written physician order within 48 hours per Federal Regulation. The verbal order must be "read back" to the physician or authorized representative, accuracy of communication confirmed and documented. Verbal orders for inpatients should be referred to the nursing unit responsible for the patient.

Standing Orders

Standing orders are permitted when used in connection with an extended course of treatment for outpatients who must be monitored over a set period of time. Standing orders may be submitted for a maximum time period of six months and must be written to specify the frequency of testing, duration, test(s) requested, diagnosis with medical necessity confirmation, physician signature and date of the order. Standing orders expire at the end of the six month period and must be renewed or reauthorized by the physician and a new order submitted. Testing will not be performed on an expired standing order.

Reflex Testing

It is the policy of CaroMont Health Laboratory to perform reflex testing based on certain test results. Reflex testing is generally limited to those tests accepted as standard medical practice such as culture sensitivities or confirmation of positive HIV results. Physicians may contact the laboratory for further reflex information or to request the initial test without the reflex test.

Test Cancellation

Requests for test cancellations are accepted prior to test set-up at no charge. Cancellations requests received after test set-up cannot be honored.

Recollect Request

Specimens received in the laboratory for both inpatient and outpatient services are subject to specimen integrity assessment prior to testing, to prevent the release of erroneous laboratory results. A recollect will be requested if the specimen is hemolyzed, clotted, insufficient volume, mislabeled, unlabeled, wrong specimen type, potentially contaminated with intravenous fluids, or other source of poor specimen quality. The processing of suboptimal specimens or "irreplaceable" specimens is approved and performed at the discretion of a laboratory supervisor.

Insufficient Volume

When the minimum volume of sample is submitted, we will make every effort to perform testing as requested. Please indicate an order of preference for testing if you suspect the specimen volume may be inadequate. The physician, unit or client office will be notified of test cancellations due to insufficient volume and recollection of sample requested.

Repeat Testing

If there are questions regarding the validity of a result with respect to clinical findings, CaroMont Health Laboratory will repeat the assay upon notification and request. Please call directly to the technical section where testing is performed.

Research Studies

Assistance is provided for CaroMont Health approved research studies or special projects which require laboratory testing. Arrangements for special billing, handling and processing must be discussed and finalized with the laboratory in advance.

Laboratory Calculations

Laboratory calculated tests are not billed when the calculation is derived from an underlying laboratory test.

CPT/ HCPCs Code Assignment

It is the policy of CaroMont Health Laboratory to assign the CPT or HCPCs code that most accurately describes the test or procedure to ensure correct billing for services.