

## Standard Operating Procedure

# Sample Labelling

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This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has been developed by the Ola During Children's / Princess Christian Maternity Hospitals, Freetown, Sierra Leone – Abertawe BroMorgannwg Health Board, Swansea, UK Link.

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This SOP is one of a series of resources developed to support clinical laboratories in low resource settings. These resources are available from the Ibadan-Swansea Partnership website: see <http://isp.swanah.org/>

We hope that this SOP will be helpful in ensuring the quality of laboratory practice. Please note that the responsibility for the use of this SOP rests with individual laboratories and their staff.

We are keen to further develop our resources so that they are as helpful as possible. Please do let us know of any comments, suggestions or feedback from using these resources. Please contact Angela Allen: [aallengm@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:aallengm@yahoo.co.uk)

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# Sample Labelling

**Why is this important?** Correct labelling is crucial to ensure that samples are easily accessible and can be identified reliably.

### Equipment

- Fine-form permanent marker pen
- Specimen collection tubes
- Grease-free sample vials

### Step 1: Labelling samples at the time of collection from the patient

Because two or more patients may share the same name, it is vital that every patient has a unique identification (ID) number.

Samples must be labelled immediately following collection from the patient.

Using a fine-form marker pen, carefully write the following information on the tube label or directly on the tube:

- Patient's name
- ID number
- Date



Remember to check that the marker pen does not smudge and that the details are written clearly and correctly.

### Step 2: Receiving and recording samples in the laboratory

When the specimen is received in the laboratory, write the following details in the laboratory ledger:

- Patient's name
- ID number
- Date
- The test(s) required

If the sample is unsuitable for analysis, notify the doctor or nurse immediately so that they can collect a fresh sample. Common reasons why samples are unsuitable are if the sample has been collected into the wrong tube/anti-coagulant or if a blood sample is clotted or haemolysed.