



**To:** All Regional Laboratories

August 3, 2004

**Re:** Specimen Collection and Transport for **West Nile Virus PCR Test**

**PLEASE DISTRIBUTE THIS INFORMATION TO ALL COLLECTION SITES.**

Dear Laboratory colleagues,

With the recent implementation of West Nile Virus PCR testing on plasma specimens, we have noticed a few issues with specimen collection and transport which were not addressed in detail in our original communication, and would like to offer the following recommendations:

For diagnostic purposes, we recommend a plasma specimen be submitted on all patients. A minimum of 5 mL of blood is required for efficient testing, although it is understood that much less will be accepted for pediatric cases. Either EDTA or PPT tubes are acceptable:

Collection Device	Specimen Preparation	Transport Conditions	Comments
EDTA (purple top)	Do not spin	Room temperature	Must be received within 6 - 8 hrs of collection*
		On ice packs or cold pack to maintain temperature of 1-5 °C	Must be received within 24 hrs of collection**
PPT (Plasma Preparation Tube) (clear plastic cap, red stopper)	Centrifuge but do not pour off	On ice packs or cold pack to maintain temperature of 1-5 °C	Must be received within 24 hrs of collection.** Available from ProvLab on request at 1-403-944-2583 or 1-780-407-8971

\* Please avoid extremes in temperature.

\*\* Please ensure that the blood sample does not freeze (Freezing will lyse the red blood cells and inhibit the PCR).

We appreciate your comments and feedback on West Nile virus testing and encourage you to let us know how this program is working for your region.

Sincerely,  
 Peter Tilley MD FRCPC  
 Medical Microbiologist  
 403-944-1203  
 p.tilley@provlab.ab.ca