

Blood Gas Testing – Update to Collection Container

The VCUH Blood Gas Laboratory will change the acceptable blood collection tube for select testing from sodium heparin to lithium heparin. The VCUH Blood Gas Laboratory will no longer accept sodium heparin blood collection for select testing (see below). Effective immediately, Lithium Heparin collection tubes without a gel barrier will be the accepted tube type. Lithium heparin ABG syringes remain acceptable for all blood gas panel tests.

Effective August 12th, 2026, the Blood Gas Laboratory implemented a new NOVA Prime Plus blood gas analyzers. The approved specimen collection tube for testing performed on the new analyzers is Lithium Heparin. Sodium heparin blood collection tubes is no longer be accepted for testing.

Lithium heparin blood collection tubes (instead of sodium heparin blood collection tubes) are acceptable for the following tests – ABG syringes remain acceptable for all tests:

- Carboxyhemoglobin (COHb)
- Methemoglobin (MetHb)
- Total Hemoglobin (tHb)
- Whole Blood Potassium
- Whole Blood Chloride
- Ionized Calcium
- Ionized Magnesium
- Whole Blood Glucose
- Whole Blood Lactate
- Whole Blood Blood Urea Nitrogen (BUN)
- Whole Blood Creatinine

For questions, please contact Pathology Client Services at (804) 828-7284 or Blood Gas Laboratory at (804) 628-6991.