

SPECIMEN ERRORS

A C L O S E - U P L O O K



Patient safety events involving specimens can be precursors to serious mistakes, including diagnostic errors and inappropriate treatments.

LEARN TO REPORT

Specimen errors can happen in any department and can be reported by any team member.



68.2%

Pre-Analytical Phase

of specimen errors occur during the process of obtaining a specimen. Examples include:

- Incorrect patient
- Incorrect test request or test selection
- Incorrect collection technique
- Mislabeled or unlabeled specimen
- Lost specimen

REPORT TO LEARN

The good news is specimen errors are often preventable, and effective interventions do not have to be resource intensive.



13.3%

Analytical Phase

of specimen errors occur during actual laboratory testing or diagnostic procedures and processes. Examples include:

- Improper use of equipment
- Use of substandard or expired reagent
- Improper technical procedures



18.5%

Post-Analytical Phase

of specimen errors occur after specimens are examined and are more likely to result in patient harm. Examples include:

- Inaccurate reporting of results
- Results posted to wrong patient record
- Incorrect interpretation of results
- Delay in communicating or reporting results
- Failure to report critical results