Endocrinology Submission Guidelines

The condition and quality of the samples when received can have a significant impact on the accuracy of the test results. Please do not send whole blood. Serum is the preferred sample type for the majority of the endocrine tests we offer. If plasma must be used, please follow the instructions of the tube manufacturer (e.g. blood fill volumes, etc.) to avoid potential assay interference. A general specimen collection and sample processing procedure is:

1) Collect blood using a plain red-top collection tube without any additives (i.e. clot activators, no SST tubes, etc.).
2) Allow adequate time for the blood to clot to ensure sufficient sample yield for testing and to avoid fibrin formation. Usually, at least 30 minutes or more is needed. Store blood in the refrigerator if time before centrifugation will be greater than 2 hours.
3) Centrifuge specimen at a speed and time (~10 minutes) that allow for adequate separation and sample volume.
4) After centrifugation, transfer the serum into a tube properly labeled and appropriate for shipping and/or frozen storage (e.g. polypropylene or plastic tubes are recommended but only required for canine ACTH).
5) Store the aliquoted serum in a freezer prior to shipping especially if the time before pick up will be 12 hours or longer.
6) Ship serum on cold packs, preferably using an overnight or 2 day courier service.
7) Include all needed paper work and write legibly on tubes and accession forms to ensure proper handling, identification and testing.
8) The sample(s) should optimally arrive either frozen or chilled.

Please do not use serum separator tubes (SST) for sample collection, shipping or as a storage tube. Some brands have clotting additives that can interfere with the assays and affect test results. When these tubes are used for shipping after centrifugation, the gel barrier can dislodge during transit, and this will usually ruin the sample. Do not send severely hemolyzed or lipemic samples. Please contact the Endocrinology Laboratory directly at (607) 253-3673 with any sample submission questions.

Plasma Samples for ACTH Testing
An EDTA plasma tube (lavender top) MUST be used for specimen collection. Collect enough blood to the tube fill volume, then gently mix by inversion, and chill immediately by refrigeration or immersion into an ice bath. Separate the plasma from cells by centrifugation as quickly as possible for dogs, and within 4 hours for horses. Centrifuge for ~ 5-10 minutes (preferably in a refrigerated centrifuge) and transfer the plasma into a plastic (canine/equine) or coated glass (equine only) tube and freeze immediately. Ship samples on frozen cold packs using an overnight courier service. Plasma samples should arrive frozen (strongly recommended) or adequately chilled (i.e., kept near 4°C at all times).

OFA Canine Thyroid Registry Panel
Please check the Endocrinology Clinical Testing Service web page or contact the lab to obtain client instructions for OFA testing. All samples submitted for OFA certification must be separated serum from freshly collected canine blood drawn into a plain red top tube. The samples must arrive either chilled or frozen, and can be accepted unchilled (room temperature) if received within two days (48 hours) of the collection date. A completed AHDC accession form, OFA Application for Thyroid Database form and a check payable to the OFA (for initial animal registry fee), must also accompany the sample. Lab results will be mailed, faxed, or e-mailed and cannot be reported by phone. Severely lipemic or hemolyzed samples or samples that arrive unchilled after two days, cannot be accepted for OFA testing.
Lag Time
Endocrinology test “lag time(s)” ranges as seen in the AHDC fees manual and on the web Clinical Endocrine Test details listing, are based on the frequency of test set up, along with the day the sample is received. Our range calculations include weekends for accuracy. See the Routine Testing Schedule on the Endocrinology Clinical Testing Service web page. When possible, plan shipment of samples for arrival the afternoon prior to the scheduled day of testing.

Results Reporting/Consultations/Interpretations
Contact the Endocrinology Laboratory directly at (607) 253-3673, regarding any test results, interpretations, or sample discrepancies. Veterinarians or the authorized submitter should have their AHDC account number ready when making inquiries. Consultations by our veterinarians and qualified staff are provided at no charge for testing done within our laboratory. We prefer not to interpret test results from other labs since we will not be familiar with their test methods and validation. The laboratory offers gratis re-testing of samples on a limited basis after consultation, assuming residual sample volume and quality are adequate for re-testing. Contact the Endocrinology Laboratory director (607) 253-3796 or laboratory manager (607) 253-3593 if you are experiencing unusual delays with lab results.