

# **Special Specimen Handling**

## **Cold Agglutinins**

Cold agglutinins are antibodies produced in response to *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* infection (atypical pneumonia). The antibodies formed may attach to red blood cells at temperatures below body temperature, and as such, the specimen must be kept warm until the serum is separated from the cells. Blood is collected in red-topped tubes pre-warmed in the incubator at 37 degrees Celsius for 30 minutes.

## **Chilled specimens**

Some tests require that the specimen collected be chilled immediately after collection in crushed ice or ice and water mixture. Likewise, the specimen must be immediately transported to the laboratory for processing. Some of the tests that require chilled specimen are: arterial blood gases, ammonia, lactic acid, pyruvate, ACTH, gastrin, and parathyroid hormone.

## **Light-sensitive specimens**

Specimens are protected from light by wrapping the tubes in aluminum foil immediately after they are drawn (or drawn into amber blood collection vials). Exposure to light could alter the test results for: Bilirubin, beta-carotene, Vitamins A & B6, and porphyrins.