Dear Doctor or Laboratory Technician:

You recently requested information on how to ship serum to our research laboratory for autoantibody testing.

For adults: please draw two 10 ml red top or serum separator tubes.

For children: a specimen of at least 1 ml of serum is desirable. Do not exceed established guidelines for blood withdrawals from pediatric patients.

Please spin the blood down, draw off the serum, and place the serum in a clean, preferably sterile, plastic, leak proof container. Discard the clot. Label the serum container with the patient’s name and the date the serum was drawn. These specimens should arrive in our lab within 2 days of shipping if possible.

As long as the patient does not have a known or suspected infectious disease you may use any shipper who accepts “Diagnostic Specimens” (eg Federal Express, Emery, DHL etc.). You must package the specimen in accordance with US DOT regulations and the requirements of the carrier you select. Packaging will include a sealed watertight primary vessel as well as a watertight secondary vessel with enough absorbent material to absorb all of the serum should a leak occur. For information regarding how to package these specimens contact your shipper and carefully follow their instructions. Do not use US Mail since the delivery address is a loading dock and not a US mail drop off point for the University.

Specimens may be frozen and held until it is practical to send them. Specimens should be shipped on dry ice if possible. All packages containing dry ice must have a “dangerous goods” label and a sticker identifying the weight of the dry ice that is enclosed. Most carriers will not accept packages containing dry ice at all. You may substitute several cold packs if dry ice is not available or is not allowed by your shipper. You may ship Monday through Wednesday within the continental United States.

The laboratory is not open for receiving on weekends or holidays. Send the specimens to:

ATTENTION: Noreen Fertig
University of Pittsburgh
Medicine/Rheumatology
South 765 Biomedical Science Tower
3500 Lothrop Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15261

Please include a diagnosis or brief description of the patient if you have not already given this information to one of our physicians. Also list a fax number or address where results can be mailed to the physician requesting the tests. So that I know when to expect the specimens, please call me or leave a message on my answering machine at (412) 383-9838 with the patient’s name and the date the blood was shipped.

If you have any questions, or require any additional information, please contact me at (412) 383-9838 or fertig@msx.dept-med.pitt.edu.

Noreen Fertig
Research Specialist