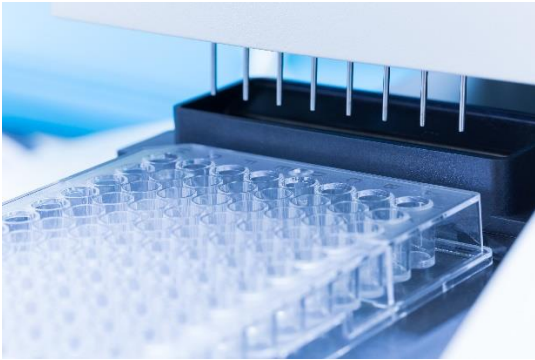


SAMPLING AND SUBMISSION TIPS FROM OUR LAB SERVICES TEAM



At Avacta Animal Health we are a team of vets, vet nurses, pet owners and animal lovers, so we understand all too well that taking blood samples from our furry friends is not always straightforward! For this reason, we try our utmost to avoid requesting repeat samples, but there are times when we simply have to. In this blog, Ruth Hunter, one of our in-house laboratory analysts, explains why a sample might not be suitable for testing, plus gives an insight into how our **free serum storage facility** can help you provide the optimal sample.

SAMPLING AND SUBMISSION – COMMON PROBLEMS

Our laboratory team takes great pride in delivering high quality results in a quick turnaround time (2-4 working days), to enable you to take the next steps towards making your allergy patients feel better. An important part of this is being able to test samples as soon as possible after they arrive at our laboratory in Wetherby, West Yorkshire. As a devoted cat owner, I am very sympathetic to the challenges owners can face with a visit to the vet, so I hope the pointers below help make your sampling and submission process as efficient as possible, and avoid the need for an additional visit to take a repeat sample.

1. **Non-viable samples** – issues with sample quality are the number one reason we have to request a repeat sample. There are many different factors that affect sample quality, many of which are eliminated by sending us serum rather than whole blood. For more information about reducing the risk of non-viable samples you can download our '[Reference Guide on Reducing the Risk of Non-Viable Samples](#)' from the Avacta Practice Portal.
2. **Insufficient samples** – it sounds obvious but having enough serum to be able to carry out the test is really important. Our [Submission Form](#) tells you how much is needed as a minimum for each test, but the more we have, the less likely it is that we'll have to request a further sample.
3. **Incorrect tubes** – samples must be submitted in either plain tubes (white top, or red top if using a vacutainer) or serum gel tubes (brown top). Other tube types, including those containing anticoagulants are not suitable, as they can interfere with testing. To check you are using the correct type of tube, visit the [FAQs section](#) of the Avacta Practice Portal.
4. **Incomplete submission forms** – before testing we like to have as much information about a pet as possible, so filling out all sections of the [Submission Form](#) fully means we won't need to get in touch to check any details when you are busy with other patients. It also means that, if needed, we can quickly direct any queries to the right place. Writing the pet's name on the submission tubes as well, allows us to check the sample against the form, which is even more important if you are sending samples from more than one patient at the same time.
5. **Sub-optimal timing of sampling** – in order to get the most meaningful results, it is worth thinking about **when** you choose to sample. Age, presence of symptoms, allergen exposure, seasonality and current medication can all affect results. Our '[Reference Guide on Optimal Timing for Serology Testing](#)' and our '[Medication Withdrawal Guide](#)' can help you plan the best time to take the sample.

NEED A LITTLE THINKING TIME?



You may find it is the optimal time to sample a patient, but you or your client may not yet be sure whether you are going to run an allergy test. Avacta Animal Health's **free of charge serum storage facility** helps by enabling you to sample when the patient is symptomatic, and before using any medications which may affect testing, and then test at a later date if and when you are ready.

Our laboratory is home to excellent, temperature-controlled freezers, which are monitored 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, by our experienced team. They provide the best conditions for storing your samples.

The three-month storage service can be extended if required. So even if you've not made a firm decision about what the next step is, we're happy to look after the sample in the meantime. Just tick the storage option on our submission form (see below) and send it straight to us after sampling.

SAMPLE SUBMISSION FORM

PLEASE SELECT INDIVIDUAL TEST(S) BY TICKING THE APPROPRIATE BOX(ES)

STORAGE ONLY



Samples will be held free of charge for 3 months. If you select storage only, please do not tick a test type. Please contact us when you wish to run this sample.

SENDING YOUR SERUM SAMPLES TO OUR LABORATORY

We have teamed up with Royal Mail to ensure posting samples to us is hassle-free and doesn't cost you a penny. You can [book a collection online](#) using the details on the envelopes provided in all our submission boxes, and track where your sample is on its journey using the reference number on the label. Alternatively, you can just pop it straight into a post box!

To watch a short video on how to prepare your sample and package it up ready for Royal Mail collection please [click here](#).

SAMPLE COLLECTION SERVICE!



GETTING IN TOUCH

If you have any questions about the sampling and submission process, our friendly and knowledgeable Technical Support team are waiting to take your call on **0800 3 047 047** (9am to 6pm Monday to Thursday, 9am to 5pm on Friday). You can also email them at technical.support@avacta.com or book a call back slot via our [website](#).

All the guides mentioned above, plus a wealth of other vet and pet owner support material, can be found in our [Practice Portal](#).

We look forward to helping in any way we can with your allergy cases.