**Specimen Type/Containers:** Collect specimens in lead-free, anticoagulant NOT expired tubes.

**Venous whole blood:** Use onlyK2EDTA (tan-top) tube or K2EDTA or Na2EDTA (royal blue-top) tubes.

**Fingerstick/Capillary:** Sarstedt Microvette CB300 or similar EDTA microtainers.

**Labeling of Primary Specimen Container:** Two unique patient identifiers must be on the tube (i.e patient’s full name, date of birth, or medical record number.

**STAT samples:** Clearly mark STAT on the submission form and tube. If specimen is received before 3:00pm, it will be tested and reported on the same day.

**Requisition to Use:** Complete the Childhood Lead Screening Specimen Submission form.

# SPECIMEN COLLECTION INSTRUCTIONS:

**VENIPUNCTURE:**

1. Use universal precautions when collecting specimens and follow your facility’s blood collection protocols.
2. Fill the container ¾ full to ensure proper blood to EDTA ratio. Underfilling or overfilling the tube may result in poor specimen quality due to an improper blood to EDTA ratio.
3. Invert the tube several times after collection to thoroughly mix the anticoagulant with the specimen.

**NOTE**: To prevent contamination, Do **NOT** transfer venous specimens into a different container including capillary microcontainers. Venous specimens should be submitted in its original collection tube. If the venous specimen is received in a microtainer, it will be reported as unsatisfactory.

# FINGERSTICK CAPILLARY:

1. Use universal precautions when collecting blood specimens and follow your facility’s blood collection protocol.
2. Clean patient’s finger with alcohol and avoid contact with the cleaned area to minimize potential contamination.
3. Hold the finger in an upward position and lance the palm-side surface of the finger with proper size lancet (2mm, 21-gauge lancet is recommended) Press firmly on the finger when making the puncture. This helps to obtain the proper amount of blood for testing.
4. Apply slight pressure to start blood flow. Blot the first drop of blood onto a gauze pad and discard.
5. Keep the finger in a downward position and gently massage it to maintain blood flow. Hold the tube horizontally or at a 30-degree angle and collect the drops of blood with the tip. The receptable fills automatically due to capillary action.
6. Massage the finger to maintain a free flow of blood and fill the tube at least ¾ full. Underfilling or overfilling the tube may result in poor specimen quality due to an improper blood to EDTA ratio.
7. After collecting the blood, affix the attached stopper firmly onto the tip in horizontal or slightly tilted position. Then push the top stopper on.
8. Place the closed receptacle in the freestanding carrier tube.
9. Invert the tube several times after collection to thoroughly mix the anticoagulant with the specimen.

**NOTE:** To minimize contamination, do not spread the blood over a large area and avoid collecting smeared blood.

# Specimen Storage Condition after Collection:

All specimens should be refrigerated until they can be transported or mailed to the MASPHL. Specimens should be submitted daily to prevent delayed results, although weekly delivery is acceptable.

# Packaging and Shipping Instructions:

The collected specimen should be placed in a zip lock specimen transport bag with absorbent material such as gauze or cotton pad. The submission form and other paperwork should be folded and placed in the outer pouch of the specimen transport bag. **Do NOT use tape to affix the specimen to the submission form or to seal the finger stick tube**. All blood lead specimens sent to MASPHL through commercial carriers must comply with the USPS, DOT, and IATA regulations for “**Exempt Human Specimens/Non-regulated Materials**”. **NOTE**: Padded envelopes are not acceptable as a tertiary container and should **NOT** be used as outer packaging.

Send samples to:

MA State Public Health Laboratory

STAR Lab - Childhood Lead Screening

305 South Street, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

Specimen collection fingerstick capillary tubes, submission forms, specimen transport bags, and outer pre-printed shipping cartons are available, free of charge by calling (617) 983-6640 or [MASPHL.SpecimenKitOrders@mass.gov](mailto:MASPHL.SpecimenKitOrders@mass.gov)

**Questions regarding testing or results:** Contact Laboratory Client Services at (617) 983-6665.