

Hair Specimen Collection Protocol

Special Notes:

- i. Hair from head is preferred; however, pubic hair can also be used. *Do not combine head and pubic hair.*
- ii. Hair that has been permed, dyed, bleached, or otherwise chemically treated is vulnerable to contamination or removal of hair mineral content, thus effecting the proper interpretation of the results. One should wait 6-8 weeks before taking a sample from the first inch of new hair growth as possible.
- iii. Dandruff shampoos containing zinc (Head & Shoulders), selenium (Selsun Blue), lead (Grecian Formula) or other medicated ingredients should not be used before taking a sample.
- iv. If hair is too short to cut, thinning shears may be used to take the sample by placing them next to the scalp.
- v. The use of pubic hair is best reserved for situations where head hair is unavailable or for confirmatory testing of toxic elements when contamination of head hair is suspected.

Instructions:

Note: Wash hands and ensure scissors are clean and in good condition.

1. Samples should be collected from the back of the head close to the nape of the neck - *see illustration at right.*
2. A **Hair Scale** is included in this sampling kit to assist you in collecting the correct amount of hair. Use it up according to the instructions printed on the scale.
3. **Using stainless steel scissors**, cut hair as close to the scalp as possible. It is best if small amounts of hair are cut from 4 to 6 areas.
4. As each segment of hair is cut from the head, **save only about 1-inch (2.5cm) from the part closest to the scalp** (new growth). Cut-off and discard the remaining length of hair. Place the hair on the scale provided or directly into the zip-lock bag if the scale is not used.
5. **Continue to collect hair until the scale tips** or about one (1) heaping tablespoon is collected (if scale is not used). This step is extremely important because hair is not completely homogenous with respect to mineral concentration. Hair is light so enough hair (~1 gram) must be taken to average out these differences.
6. **Label the zip-lock bag** with your practitioner number and name, patient name and date sample collected. Place hair in bag and seal tightly.

