

Critical Care Guidelines  
FOR CRITICAL CARE USE ONLY  
**THIOPENTONE LEVELS**



Previously done at the RIE, these are now processed in Wales.

**Process:** Phone Duty Biochemist prior to sampling to explain reason for testing and request their assistance in liaising with lab in Wales.

**Sample:** 5mls blood in EDTA red-topped tube

**Ordering:** Not through Trak, but by hand-written tube and request.  
Envelope noted "FAO Duty Biochemist WGH/RIE" & porter to Lab.

**Destination:** Biochemist will helpfully send it off via courier to Wales if they have been contacted to do this!

Address: Toxicology Lab  
The Academic Centre  
Llandough Hospital  
Penarth  
CF64 2XX

**Timings:** **Analysis by the Cardiff lab:**

Weekdays: daytime analysis

Weekends: tests are analysed 09:00-12:00

Samples must reach lab in Cardiff by 12:00 Monday – Friday and 09:00 Saturday/Sunday to guarantee results that day.

**Couriering samples from Edinburgh:**

Monday – Thursday: Samples must be in your local lab (WGH/RIE) by 1pm for delivery by 12pm the following day.

Friday – Sunday: **The routine courier contract does not cover Friday and Saturday collection.** Where analysis can not be delayed please discuss with the biochemist. For an additional cost, pick up can be arranged for Friday, although please note delivery is only guaranteed before 12 and as such the sample may not be analysed until Sunday morning. Pick up on Saturday will not reach the Cardiff lab until Monday (before 12pm).

**Results:** Will be bleeped through if details given on form & to duty biochemist

**Contact no:** 02920716893 (Wales lab)

X 31899 for WGH biochemist (Mon-Fri 09:00 – 18:30, Saturday 09:00 – 13:00)

X 26879 for RIE biochemist (Monday – Friday 09:00 – 17:15, Saturday 09:00 – 13:00).

**Units:** Cardiff reports units in mg/L

If assays of thiopentone are available, it is recommended that brain-stem testing should not be undertaken if the level is >5mg/L. If levels are not available then determining an adequate duration to exclude the effects of depressant drugs will involve prediction according to pharmacokinetic principles in both adults and children.

Reference

A CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE DIAGNOSIS AND CONFIRMATION OF DEATH. October 2008 July 2011

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| <b>Title: THIOPENTONE LEVELS</b> |  |
| <b>ID:</b>                       | <b>Authors:</b> Morag R Naysmith in liaison with Clinical Biochemistry |
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