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Proper Sample Preparation for Chemistry Determinations - Minimize Hemolysis!

Hawkins, et al. published a detailed article in *Veterinary Clinical Pathology* this year (Vol. 35, pages 219-225). In their study, they examined the effects of hemolysis on 15 biochemical tests. Significant increases in potassium, phosphorus, albumin (clinical analyzer determined), and LDH were found. Moderate levels of hemolysis resulted in an increase of 10% in phosphorus levels and 34% in LDH levels. Marked hemolysis also altered AST, CK, and uric acid. Many other analytes changed in lesser amounts. The study clearly demonstrated that hemolysis can result in clinically meaningful changes.

Previously, our lab has demonstrated that hemolysis and lipemia have minimal effects on bile acids quantitation by the RIA method (*JAMS* 17(1):11-15,2003). However, both can alter protein electrophoresis results. Moderate hemolysis can artificually increase in the gamma globulin fraction – thus decreasing the A/G ratio (Cray, in press).

If your sample has hemolysis or lipemia, we will note it in the comment section of your case report. In some cases, we will not analyze your sample if we believe the results will be significantly altered. To limit hemolysis, we recommend centrifuging your sample and separating the plasma before shipment. We provide small snap-cap microfuge tubes at no cost. Centrifugation of the gel-type green top tubes is acceptable but note that the RBC will alter the glucose levels and not all gels stay intact during shipping – thus allowing for remixing. Please contact the lab for the tubes.