2019-NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) SPECIMEN COLLECTION KIT
INSTRUCTIONS

**Use:** To collect nasopharyngeal specimens for 2019-Novel Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2), the virus that causes COVID-19.

**Kit contents:**
1. Tube of Universal Transport Media (UTM)
2. Nasopharyngeal swab (smaller swab, flexible shaft)
3. Ziploc specimen bag containing absorbent pad
4. RI State Health Laboratories Test Requisition form
5. Ice pack (keep in a freezer until ready to package & transport specimens)
**Collection Instructions:**

See the current CDC guidelines for upper and lower respiratory specimen collection and appropriate biosafety precautions for healthcare workers found at:


- **Label tube of UTM legibly with the patient’s name **and** date of birth, or medical record number (specimen tube must have two unique patient identifiers on it, or it will not be tested).**

- **Nasopharyngeal specimen:**
  - Use the flexible shaft NP swab provided to collect the specimen.
  - Have the patient blow their nose and then check for obstructions.
  - Tilt the patient’s head back 70 degrees & insert the swab into nostril parallel to the palate (not upwards) until resistance is encountered or the distance is equivalent to that from nostrils to outer opening of patient’s ear indicating contact with nasopharynx. Leave swab in place for several seconds to absorb secretions. Slowly remove the swab while rotating it.

- Insert the swab into the tube of UTM, making certain that the swab tip is covered by the liquid in the tube. The swab is to remain in the tube for transport

- Plastic shaft NP swab: The swab shaft extends past the top of the tube. Snap off at the break line on the shaft, allowing the end with the swab tip to remain in the liquid. The tip of the swab must be immersed in the liquid.
• Securely tighten the cap on the UTM tube and recheck to make certain it is labeled with two patient identifiers. Insert tube into specimen transport bag and close bag tightly.

• Complete a RI State Health Laboratories test requisition form. For test requested, write “COVID-19” under Comments/Other test requests. Ensure that all information is legible, complete and accurate. Place the completed form into the outside pocket of the specimen bag. Do not enclose it inside the bag with the UTM tube.

**Holding:**

Store specimens refrigerated (2 – 8 °C) until ready to send to the state laboratory. Specimens may be held refrigerated for up to 72 hours. Specimens must be received at the RI State Health Laboratories within three days of being collected.

**Transport:**

- Healthcare providers must **IMMEDIATELY** notify the RIDOH Center for Acute Infectious Disease Epidemiology at (401) 222-2577 in the event of a Patient Under Investigation (PUI) for COVID-19 prior to specimen collection.
- Phone the RI State Health Laboratories Molecular Diagnostics Lab 222-5538 to arrange for courier transport of specimens. **Make certain that specimens are transported with a frozen ice pack** in the transport container provided by the state lab.

- **Packaging:**
  - Place the Ziploc bag containing the specimen vial **along with the frozen ice pack** into the styrofoam box that is contained inside the cardboard shipping box.
  - Specimens must be packaged and shipped in accordance with appropriate federal Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations.
  - Ensure that the outer packing box that is supplied with the specimen kit is sealed securely with packaging tape.
  - Ensure shipper label information for your facility is completed in full and affixed to the outer package.

**Contact for questions regarding specimen collection, packaging and shipping:**

RI State Health Laboratories Molecular Diagnostics Lab: 222-5538

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