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

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

**Kit contents:** 1 Tube of Universal Transport Media (UTM)
- 1 Nasopharyngeal swab (smaller swab, flexible shaft) *(CDC recommended)* or 1 Nasal swab
- 1 Ziploc specimen bag containing absorbent pad
- 1 RI State Health Laboratories Test Requisition form

**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:** *(CDC recommended specimen type)*

- Use a flexible shaft NP swab to collect the specimen. Do not substitute with nasal swab.
- 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.

![Image of nasopharyngeal swab collection]

*Figure 1. Nasopharyngeal Swab Collection*

- 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:** If 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.

**Anterior nasal specimen:**

- Have the patient blow their nose into a tissue. Discard tissue.
- Insert the entire collection tip of the swab provided (usually ½ to ¾ of an inch, or 1 to 1.5 cm) inside the nostril. Do not substitute with NP swab.
- Sample the nasal wall by very firmly rotating the swab in a circular path against the nasal wall at least 4 times.
- Take approximately 15 seconds to collect the specimen. Be sure to collect any nasal drainage that may be present on the swab.
- Repeat in the other nostril using the same swab.
Figure 2. Nares Swab Collection

- Place swab, tip first, into the transport tube provided
- Snap off at the break line of the shaft, allowing the end with the swab tip to remain in the liquid.

**Next Steps:**

- Securely tighten the cap on the tube of UTM 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 check COVID-19 PCR. 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 specimen 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.

**Packaging:**

- Specimens must be packaged and shipped in accordance with appropriate Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations for Category B Biological Substances.
- Place the securely sealed Ziploc bag containing the specimen tube into a transport cooler **along with a frozen ice pack**. Make certain cooler is compliant and labeled appropriately for Category B Biological Substances.

**Transport:**

➢ Submitters are responsible for arranging for specimens to be transported to the RI State Health Laboratory. (ex: commercial courier)

**For questions regarding specimen collection, packaging and shipping:**
Call the RI State Laboratory at 222-5600 and ask to speak with the person who can assist with COVID packaging and shipping questions.

Sept2021.rev6