



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

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

Kit contents: 1 Tube of either Viral Transport Media (VTM) or saline
1 Nasopharyngeal swab (small swab tip, flexible shaft)
1 Ziploc specimen bag containing absorbent pad
1 RI State Health Laboratories Test Requisition form
1 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:

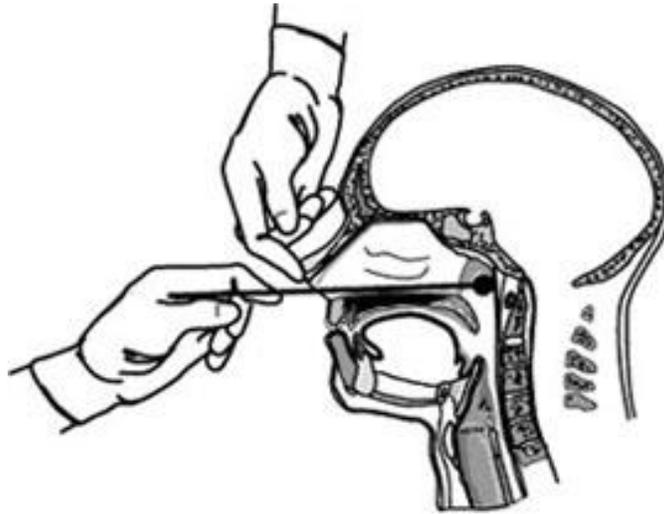
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/guidelines-clinical-specimens.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/caring-for-patients.html>

- Label tube (VTM or saline) 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 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 VTM or saline, 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.
- **Wire shaft swab:** cut the upper end of the wire with clean scissors so that it is even or below the top of the vial, allowing the end with the swab tip to remain in the liquid.

Next Steps:

- Securely tighten the cap on the tube and recheck to make certain it is labeled with two patient identifiers. Write "NP" on the tube. 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, or check off COVID PCR on the test menu. **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 for delivery to State Lab:**

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 **along with the frozen ice pack** into the styrofoam box that is contained within the cardboard shipping box. **Wet ice is not acceptable – use ice packs.** If using an alternate type of packaging, make certain it is compliant with regulations and labeled appropriately for Category B Biological Substances.
- Ensure that the outer packing box **is sealed securely** with packaging tape.
- Ensure shipper label information for your facility is completed in full and affixed to the outer package.

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.