Updated Mpox Specimen Collection Instructions for Rhode Island State Health Laboratories (RISHL)

Please note important changes to mpox specimen collection and transport to RISHL:

- All specimens will be tested using the Cepheid Xpert Mpox RT-PCR Assay (under EUA).
- Nylon swab instead of Dacron swab.
- Swabs must be placed in viral or universal transport media rather than a dry tube.
- Only one swab per lesion is needed rather than two.*
- Healthcare facilities must supply their own specimen collection and transport materials.
- Facility is responsible for transporting specimens to the Rhode Island State Health Laboratories (RISHL).
- Calls to RIDOH for approval of specimen submission are limited to business hours.
- Specimen delivery to the RISHL and testing at the RISHL are limited to business hours.
- Improperly labeled specimens will be rejected by RISHL.

Specimens for mpox testing may be collected at any time, but submission to RISHL must be approved prior to specimen arrival.

- RIDOH can be reached Monday-Friday from 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at 401-222-2577.
- Specimens collected after hours should be held for delivery until the next business day.
- Calls to RIDOH for approval of specimen submission should occur during business hours.
- Patients being tested for mpox must isolate until test results are back.

Personal Protective Equipment

When collecting specimens for mpox testing, wear the following personal protective equipment:

1. Gloves
2. Disposable gown
3. Eye protection (face shield or goggles)
4. N95 mask (fit-tested, if possible)

Materials Needed for Specimen Collection and Transport

1. **2 nylon flocked swab** (Copan P/N 502CS01, or equivalent) with a plastic shaft (not wooden)
2. **2 tubes containing 3 mL viral transport media or universal transport media**
3. 2 plastic specimen bags
4. Absorbent pad
5. Rhode Island State Health Laboratories (RISHL) requisition form
6. Ice pack (for transport)
7. Styrofoam box (for transport)
8. Cardboard box (for transport)

Specimen Collection Preparation:

1. Label all tubes as follows:
    a. Patient Name

b. Date of Birth
c. Date of Collection
d. Vesicle Location

2. Complete Rhode Island State Health Laboratories (RISHL) requisition form:
    a. All patient information fields
    b. Provider and facility information if applicable
    c. Collection date
    d. Specimen source (vesicle)
    e. Vesicle location
    f. In comments section write "Mpox PCR"

Mpox Specimen Collection Instructions

1. Two lesions should be sampled, preferably from different locations on the body or from lesions that differ in appearance.*
2. **Do NOT unroof the lesion.**
3. **Swab the lesion vigorously to collect adequate DNA using a nylon flocked swab**.

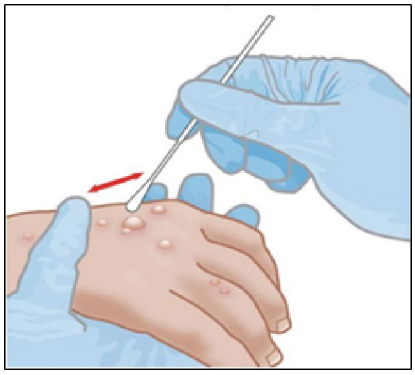

Figure 1. Lesion Swab Collection. Illustration courtesy of Cepheid Xpert Mpox EUA

4. Place the swab in a properly labeled tube containing 3 mL of VTM or UTM and break off the end of the shaft.
5. Each swab should be in its own tube — do not pool specimens.
6. Place tube in plastic bag.
7. Repeat on a second lesion.
8. Place RISHL requisition form on the outside pocket of one of the two bags.
9. Although swabs should be transported to RISHL as soon as possible, lesion swab specimens can be stored refrigerated (2–8 °C) up to seven days in viral transport medium.
10. **The collecting facility is responsible for specimen transportation.**
11. This is a **Category B Specimen** and should be transported in the following packaging:
    a. Specimen tubes must be in plastic bags
    b. Place specimen bags on top of frozen ice pack in Styrofoam container.
    c. Place Styrofoam container inside cardboard box.
    d. Label cardboard box: Hazardous Material Category B Specimen
12. Specimens should be transported to the loading dock at 50 Orms Street in Providence, Monday-Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. only. Specimens collected after hours should be held at the collecting facility until the next business day.

** If travel history puts Clade I mpox on the differential, then collect **two dry swabs per lesion** and put each swab into a separate properly labeled tube **without** transport media.*