

WVDHHR | BPH | OFFICE OF LABORATORY SERVICES

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19) SPECIMEN COLLECTION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS Updated SPECIMEN COLLECTION Guidance

Guidance below relates only to specimens to be sent to the WV Office of Labs Services. Please refer to applicable guidance for tests performed through other laboratories.

NOTE: All suspect COVID-19 cases submitted to the Office of Lab Services must be evaluated and approved for testing by the Division of Infectious Disease Epidemiology (DIDE) prior to submission. Please call (304) 558-5358, extension 1.

SPECIMEN COLLECTION

For initial diagnostic testing, CDC recommends collecting and testing upper respiratory nasopharyngeal specimens sent in viral transport media (VTM). But, due to the nationwide shortage of collection supplies, some alternative materials have been deemed as acceptable by the FDA for COVID-19 testing.

Safety Precautions

Healthcare personnel collecting specimens from patients with known or suspected COVID-19 should adhere to Standard, Contact, and Airborne Precautions. This includes use of N-95 or higher-level respirator or facemask if respirator is not available, eye protection, gloves, and a disposable gown. The number of healthcare professionals present during the collection procedures should be limited to only those essential for patient care. Collection of diagnostic nasopharyngeal respiratory specimens can be performed in a normal examination room with the door closed.

Nasopharyngeal (NP)

- Label a viral transport media tube with the patient's name or other unique identifier and date of collection. Splitting VTM volume in half is fine as long as it's done aseptically and includes beads.
- Immobilize the patient's head and insert the swab into the nasopharynx and leave in place for 10 seconds to absorb secretions.
- Place swab immediately into labeled viral transport media tube, break swab at breakpoint, and close lid tightly. **In addition to the traditional synthetic fiber swabs with plastic shafts, there are additional swab types that can be utilized and are available (referenced below*).**
- Refrigerate immediately at 2-8°C for up to 72 hours and ship on cold packs. If the specimen cannot be shipped and received at OLS within 72 hours of collection, freeze the specimen at -70°C or less and ship on dry ice.

SPECIMEN TRANSPORT

- Specimens from suspect COVID-19 cases must be packaged, shipped, and transported as Category B Biological Substances according to the current edition of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Dangerous Goods Regulations 1.5 and 49CFR Section 172.0700 [U.S. Department of Transportation].
- Specimens must be stored at 2-8°C and shipped on cold packs. If samples are unable to be shipped and received at OLS within 72 hours of collection, they must be stored at -70°C or less and shipped on dry ice. All specimens must be packed to prevent breakage and spillage.
- Specimen containers should be sealed with Parafilm® (or equivalent adhesive) and placed in plastic zippered bags. Place enough absorbent material to absorb the entire contents of the Secondary Container (containing Primary Container) and separate the Primary Containers (containing specimen) to prevent breakage.
- Specimens being shipped with cold packs or other refrigerant blocks must be self-contained, not actual wet ice. Do not place any dry ice in the "Primary Container" or "Secondary Container", foam envelopes, plastic zippered bags, cryovial boxes, or hermetically sealed containers.
- Do not place any paperwork in the Secondary Containers or plastic zippered bags, so as not to damage the paperwork.

OTHER INFORMATION

1. Ensure that specimen is properly labeled with the patient name or unique identifier and the date of collection and that the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Specimen Submission Form is completed entirely. Be sure to include the PUI#. The patient name or unique identifier on the form and collection container must be identical.
2. Do not delay shipment. Ship as soon after collection as possible. Use priority overnight or next day shipping
3. Do not ship specimens on Saturday. If shipped on Friday, this must be coordinated with Office Lab of Services by calling (304) 558-3530 ext 2110 to ensure pickup.
4. Direct courier is also available. If during normal business hours, the specimen is to be dropped off at front desk at the Office of Lab Services. If after hours, courier must follow posted delivery instructions.
5. Specimens must be received at OLS within 72 hours of collection. If shipping is delayed, specimens must be frozen and shipped on dry ice.

***Swab choices available:**

- Puritan Nasopharyngeal swabs: 25-3317-H, 25-1406 1PF 50f, 25-800 1PD 50**, 25-3320-U, 25-3320-H EMB 80, 25-3320-U EMB 80, 25-3320-H EMB 100 and 25-3320-U EMB 100
- Copan Nasopharyngeal swabs: 503CS01, 518CS01, and 501CS01, 502CS01
- BD Nasopharyngeal swabs: 220252 and 220251
- DHI/Quidel Nasopharyngeal swabs: 503CS01.DHI
- Fisher Healthcare Nasopharyngeal swabs: 23600952, 23600956 and 23600950 Puritan Oropharyngeal swabs: 25-1506 1PF SOLID^f, 25-1506 1PF 100 f, 25-3206-H, 25-3206-U, 25-3706-H, 25-806 1PD** and 25-806 1PD BT**
- Copan Oropharyngeal swabs: 502CS01, 519CS01, 164KS01**, 167KS01**, 170KS01** and 175KS01**
- BD Oropharyngeal swabs: 220250
- Fisher Healthcare Oropharyngeal swabs: 23600950, 23600957, 1490641**, 1490640** and 1490650**
- Additional sterile flocked swabs from Puritan that may be used: 25-3316-U, 25-3316-H, 25-3317-U, 25-3318-U, 25-3318-H, 25-3320-U, 25-3320-H and 25-3319-H

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Division of Infectious Disease Epidemiology
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REFERENCES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention --- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/lab/index.html>

Office of Laboratory Services --- <https://dhhr.wv.gov/ols/labs/Pages/EmergingPathogens.aspx>

WV DHHR --- [coronavirus.wv.gov](https://www.coronavirus.wv.gov)

“Interim Guidelines for Collecting, Handling, and Testing Clinical Specimens from Persons Under Investigation (PUIs) for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)” --- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/lab/guidelinesclinical-specimens.html>

“What Healthcare Personnel Should Know about Caring for Patients with Confirmed or Possible COVID-19 Infection” - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/caring-for-patients.html>

“Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Healthcare Settings” --- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/control-recommendations.html>