



Interim Guidelines for Collection and Shipment of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) or the SARS-CoV-2 for Testing

Sample Collections

For initial diagnostic testing for COVID-19, we are following CDC recommendation by collecting and testing an upper respiratory nasopharyngeal swab (NP)

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

Collection of oropharyngeal swabs (OP) is a lower priority and if collected should be combined in the same tube as the NP. Sputum collection is only for those patients with productive cough (please do not induce sputum). Specimens should be collected as soon as possible once a patient is identified, regardless of the time of symptom onset. Please maintain proper infection control when collecting specimens (wearing PPE and exercising caution with aerosols from the patient).

Upper Respiratory Tract	
Nasopharyngeal swab and oropharyngeal swab (NP/OP swab)	<p>Use only synthetic fiber swabs (such as nylon or Dacron[®]) with aluminum or plastic shafts. Do not use calcium alginate swabs or swabs with wooden shafts, as they may contain substances that inactivate some viruses and inhibit PCR testing. Place swabs immediately into sterile tubes containing 2-3 ml of viral transport media.</p> <p>Nasopharyngeal swab: Insert a swab into the nostril parallel to the palate. Leave the swab in place for a few seconds to absorb secretions. Swab both nasopharyngeal areas with the same swab.</p> <p>Oropharyngeal swab (e.g., throat swab): Swab the posterior pharynx, avoiding the tongue.</p> <p>Combine in one container.</p>
Nasopharyngeal wash/aspirate or nasal aspirate	Collect 2-3 mL into a sterile, leak-proof, screw-cap sputum collection cup or sterile dry container.
Lower respiratory tract	
Bronchoalveolar lavage, tracheal aspirate	Collect 2-3 mL into a sterile, leak-proof, screw-cap sputum collection cup or sterile dry container.



Naval Infectious Diseases Diagnostic Laboratory
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Sputum	Have the patient rinse the mouth with water and then expectorate deep cough sputum directly into a sterile, leak-proof, screw-cap sputum collection cup or sterile dry container. Induction of sputum is not recommended.
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General Guidelines

Label each specimen container with the patient’s name, FMP/SSN, accession number, specimen type (e.g., serum), and the sample collection date. Please complete a NIDDL Test Request Form with the specific test request box marked and patient and HCP information on the bottom completed.

Shipping

Specimens must be packaged, shipped, and transported according to the current edition of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Dangerous Goods Regulations. Please follow regulations for UN 3373 Biological Substance, Category B when sending specimens. Store specimens at 2-8°C up to 72 hours and ship overnight to NIDDL on ice pack. IF immediate shipping is not possible freeze and store at <-70°C until ready for shipment. Shipment of frozen samples should include dry ice and ice pack. If shipment by FedEx a FIRST OVERNIGHT shipment is preferred as it would facilitate earlier delivery and testing. If shipping label is needed, please contact usn.detrick.nmrc.list.didd-dsd-niddl@health.mil with your contact information (name, address, phone number) and a FedEx shipping label will be created and sent to you.

Point of Contact for any questions about testing or shipping:

Naval Infectious Diseases Diagnostic Laboratory (NIDDL)
 Phone: 301-319-7150;
 Email: usn.detrick.nmrc.list.didd-dsd-niddl@health.mil)

Ship samples to:

Naval Infectious Diseases Diagnostic Laboratory (NIDDL)
 Naval Medical Research Command
 503 Robert Grant Avenue, Room 3N60
 Silver Spring MD, 20910