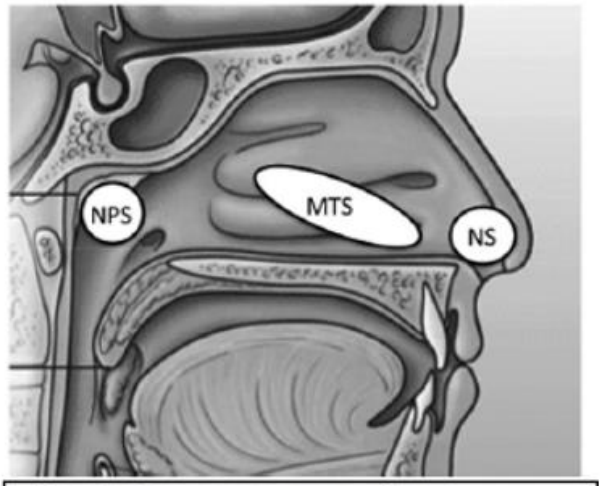
Illinois Department of Public Health, Division of Laboratories

COVID-19 Specimen Collection Procedure for PCR Testing

1. Explain the procedure to the patient (Nasopharyngeal or Nasal swab).
2. Assemble swabs, PPE, and hand sanitizer.
3. Complete all paperwork and double check that all required information is obtained and transcribed correctly. The user can use the batch upload template in the ETOR portal to collect patient information if sampling numerous patients from the same facility. This will save time. Use the batch import function in ETOR and print order forms for each sample collected.
4. Perform Hand hygiene.
5. Use gown, procedure mask or fit tested N95, face shield or goggles, gloves per facility guidance and risk assessment.
6. Twist to remove the cap from the viral transport media tube.
7. Remove the swab and handle carefully to prevent touching the sterile end of the swab.
8. Swab the patient as appropriate given the type of swab provided (Nasopharyngeal or Nasal).
9. Place the swab in the transport media tube.
10. Ensure that the swab tip is in the viral transport media.
11. Bend/cut/snap the applicator stick as appropriate such that the cap can be secured.
12. Ensure that the grooves on the specimen transport media tube are aligned with the cap before screw-capping the tube. **Screw-cap the tube <u>tightly</u> to prevent leakage.**
13. Label the vial with the following information: patient name or unique Identifier (double check spelling with patient), date and time of sample collection. A second identifier, such as date of birth, can also be indicated on the tube. Then place the specimen in a transport/storage bag with the requisition.
14. Place the labeled specimen in a biohazard bag (the lab cannot accept unlabeled specimens). Place completed requisition form or order form printed directly from the ETOR portal in **outside pocket/sleeve** of the biohazard bag. For safety reasons, the form cannot be placed in contact with the specimen in the specimen compartment.
15. Store the specimen at 2-8°C prior to and during shipment to the laboratory. Reminder- ship specimen promptly to the laboratory: all specimens must be received in the laboratory within 72 hours of collection. Use freezer packs to maintain temperatures during transit. Do not use wet ice during specimen transport: use freezer packs. If no ice pack is available, frozen bottles of water can be used to maintain specimen temperature.
16. Remove gloves, perform hand hygiene, put on fresh gloves, sanitize pen and surfaces.
17. Courier or ship specimens to the laboratory quickly. Refer to the *COVID Specimen Labeling, Storage, Transport and Resulting Instructions* document.



Sampling Locations: NPS, Nasopharyngeal swab; MTS, midturbinate swab; NS, nasal swab. (From Frazee et al., 2018)

Resources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2010). *SPECIMEN COLLECTION PROCEDURES MANUAL* Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhanes/nhanes_01_02/specimen_collection_year_3.pdf

Heikkinen T, Marttila J, Salmi AA, et al. Nasal swab versus nasopharyngeal aspirate for isolation of respiratory viruses. J Clin Microbiol. 2002;40:4337-4339.

Louisiana Department of Public Health. Information for Healthcare Providers, Healthcare Systems, and Laboratories Following Updated FDA Recommendations for SARS-CoV-2 Diagnostic Testing retrieved from http://ldh.la.gov/assets/oph/Coronavirus/resources/providers/Swabfactsheet.pdf

Sung RY, Chan PK, Choi KC, et al. Comparative study of nasopharyngeal aspirate and nasal swab specimens for diagnosis of acute viral respiratory infection. J Clin Microbiol. 2008;46:3073-3076