COVID-19 Specimen Collection and Shipment

North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health

All COVID-19 specimens submitted to the State Lab must meet the testing criteria on our website and be collected safely. The following guidance applies only to the State Lab.

Local health departments (LHDs) can request NCSLPH Specimen Collection Kits through their County Emergency Management using WebEOC. Private healthcare entities must source specimen collection materials and cover their own shipping costs.

結束 Failure to do any of the following may result in specimen rejection.

Specimen Collection

Only a nasopharyngeal swab needs to be collected. Use a synthetic-tipped, sterile swab (Dacron, polyester, etc.) of appropriate size with a plastic or metal shaft. Do not use a calcium alginate swab or one with a wood shaft.

Insert swab into the nostril parallel to the palate until resistance is encountered. Leave in place a few seconds to absorb secretions. Slowly remove swab while rotating and place the tip into a vial of sterile viral transport medium. Aseptically cut off the swab shaft so that it does not protrude above the rim of the vial and cap.

Label the vial containing the swab completely:

- NP Swab
- Patient Name
- Date of Birth
- Date of Collection

- Or any 2 unique identifiers

Store properly until shipment:

- Refrigerate at 2-8°C for up to 72 hours
- Freeze at -70°C for longer storage

Completely fill out the COVID-19 Form with the submitter EIN (facility tax #), and submitter (facility name)

Specimen Shipment

- All specimens should be packaged and shipped as a UN3373 Category B, Infectious Substance.

Ship overnight using commercial courier (UPS, FedEx) or private courier (e.g., hospital couriers). Do not use the State Courier.

- Keep cold. Ship refrigerated specimens on frozen cold packs and any -70°C frozen specimens on dry ice (the latter following IATA regulations).

- Label the package completely.

Attention: Virology/Serology Unit, COVID-19
North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health
4312 District Drive
Raleigh, NC 27607-5490

Specimen deliveries are only received at the State Lab loading dock from:

- 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., Monday - Friday
- 8 a.m. - noon, Saturday and Sunday

Result Reporting

Results are posted electronically to our CELR system, tied to the submitter’s EIN number. Visit our website for account setup and a tutorial.