

Specimen Collection Guidelines for NCLSPH

For Varicella Zoster Virus (VZV)/Chickenpox laboratory testing

- A. For direct fluorescence assay (DFA), satisfactory specimens must contain sufficient cells per viewing field.
 - 1. NCLSPH performs the Chemicon DFA for VZV which requires swabs taken from the base of 2-3 lesions and placed in viral transport media for subsequent centrifugation and concentration of cells prior to making slide preparation.
 - 2. NCLSPH will accept a pre-prepared slide if previous protocol has been followed to concentrate cells from swab

- B. For polymerase chain reaction (PCR), acceptable specimens include the following:
 - 1. dry cotton or polyester swabs taken from base of 2-3 unroofed lesions
 - 2. scabs from dried lesions

- C. For electron microscopy (EM), acceptable specimens include the following:
 - 1. vesicular fluid on EM grids
 - 2. vesicular fluid smears on glass slides
 - 3. lesion crusts and tissue biopsies
 - 4. swabs

For Vaccinia/Coxsack/Smallpox vaccine adverse effects (AE) laboratory testing

- A. For PCR, the following specimens are acceptable:
 - 1. touch preps of vesicular fluid from 2-3 lesions on glass slides
 - 2. roofs of lesion
 - 3. tissue biopsy materials

- B. For EM, the following specimens are acceptable:
 - 1. Touch preps of vesicular fluids from 2-3 lesions on glass slides
 - 2. Touch preps of vesicular fluids from 2-3 lesions on EM grids
 - 3. Roofs of lesions and crusts from lesions
 - 4. Swabs taken from base of 2-3 vesicles/lesions

For Variola/ Smallpox laboratory testing

- A. Follow same specimen collection guidelines as for Vaccinia laboratory testing
- B. Be sure appropriate NCLSPH and GCDC Epidemiology personnel have been notified
- C. Be sure that only vaccinated personnel collect and handle specimens

For detailed information, follow CDC fact sheet enclosed in this section.