Specimen Collection Instructions

2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) — Nasopharyngeal & Oropharyngeal Swabs

LabCorp's **2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) testing [139900]** is available for ordering by physicians or other authorized healthcare providers anywhere in the U.S. The test detects the presence of SAR-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, and is for use with patients who meet guidance for evaluation of COVID-19 infection.

LabCorp does not currently collect specimens for COVID-19 testing. Patients for whom testing has been ordered should not be sent to a LabCorp location to have a COVID-19 specimen collected.

Test ordering info

The test number for 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), NAA is 139900. Test **must** be ordered, and specimen collected, by a physician or other authorized healthcare provider.

Sample requirements

For oropharyngeal (OP) samples, swab included in viral transport medium is acceptable for submission. For nasopharyngeal (NP) samples, use separate NP swab submitted in viral transport medium (discard OP swab included with viral transport medium). Sterile cups are acceptable for OP or NP washes/aspirates, bronchial washings or bronchoalveolar lavage (BAL) specimens.

Send only one sample type per patient (ie, one NP or one OP sample).

Exact manufacturer of the swab and transport media may vary with supply. Any swab of appropriate size and configuration with a synthetic tip can be used, **except** for calcium alginate tips, swabs with preservatives, and swabs with wood shafts. Viral transport media acceptable for collection of influenza specimens in 1 mL or 3 mL volumes can be used to transport swabs for COVID-19 testing.

Causes for rejection

Swabs with calcium alginate or cotton tips; swabs with wooden shafts; refrigerated samples greater than 72 hours old; room temperature swabs greater than 24 hours old; improperly labeled; grossly contaminated; broken or leaking transport device; collection with substances inhibitory to PCR including heparin, hemoglobin, ethanol, EDTA concentrations >0.01M.

Turnaround Time

Current turnaround time for COVID-19 testing is estimated between 3-4 days.

Supplies needed for collection

Oropharyngeal swab collection — Specimen should be collected using a synthetic swab that is placed and transported in a viral transport medium.
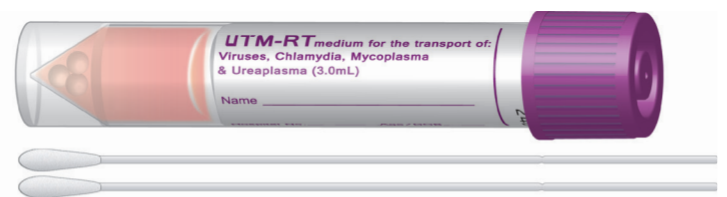
Nasopharyngeal swab collection — A synthetic nasopharyngeal swab that is placed and transported in viral transport medium is acceptable.

Specimen label and biohazard bag are also needed for both OP and NP swab collection.

Depiction of supplies used to collect NP and OP specimens. Do not send dry swabs. See LabCorp's Test Menu for information on other acceptable sample types.

Supply order #: 93307

Supply order #: 24674

March 17, 2020

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Nasopharyngeal (NP) collection

1. Assemble the supplies needed. For sample collection, have the swab and viral transport medium, specimen label and biohazard bag available.
   - If the patient has a lot of mucus in the nose, this can interfere with collection. Have the patient use a tissue to gently clean the nasal passage before a swab is taken.
2. Open the swab container and remove the swab, taking care not to touch the tip to any surface or lay it down.
   - **DO NOT use the viral transport medium swabs that come with the kit**.
3. Hold the swab with fingers placed on the score line. With the patient seated, if possible, tilt the head back 70 degrees, support the back of the head with your non-dominant hand.
   - Gently insert swab into the nostril along the septum floor of the nose extending straight back **until the posterior nasopharynx is reached** (distance from nostrils to external opening of ear).
   - Rotate the swab several times while the swab is in contact with the nasopharyngeal wall.
4. Place NP swab into the viral transport medium and break (snap) off swab at the indicator line. Replace cap and screw on securely.
5. Label sample and place in biohazard bag.
   - Freeze specimen and keep frozen.
   - Submit sample on one requisition, with test code 139900 — COVID-19. Request must include patient's name, complete address, phone number, and appropriate diagnosis code.
   - To avoid delays in turnaround time when requesting multiple tests on frozen samples, please submit separate frozen specimens for each test requested.
6. Ship frozen at -20℃ (preferred); refrigerated specimens acceptable (if received for testing within 72 hours of collection); room temperature swabs acceptable (if received within 24 hours of collection).
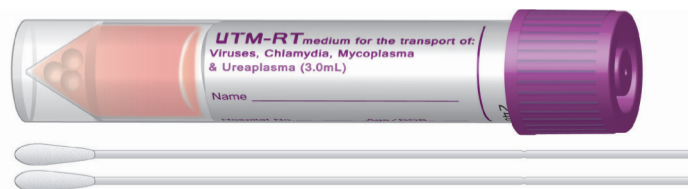
Oropharyngeal (OP) collection

1. Assemble the supplies needed. For sample collection, have viral transport medium with included swabs, specimen label, and biohazard bag available.
2. Open the viral transport medium package and remove one swab, taking care not to touch the tip to any surface or lay it down.
3. Hold the swab with fingers placed on the score line.
   - Gently insert swab into back of the throat and tonsillar area. Rub the swab over both tonsillar pillars and the posterior oropharynx; avoid touching the tongue, teeth, and gums.
4. Place swab into the viral transport medium and break (snap) off swab at the indicator line. Replace cap and screw on securely.
5. Label sample and place in biohazard bag.
   - Freeze specimen and keep frozen.
   - Submit sample on one requisition, with test code 139900 — COVID-19. Request must include patient's name, complete address, phone number, and appropriate diagnosis code.
   - To avoid delays in turnaround time when requesting multiple tests on frozen samples, please submit separate frozen specimens for each test requested.
6. Ship frozen at -20℃ (preferred); refrigerated specimens acceptable (if received for testing within 72 hours of collection); room temperature swabs acceptable (if received within 24 hours of collection).

Depiction of supplies used to collect NP and OP specimens. Do not send dry swabs. See LabCorp's Test Menu for information on other acceptable sample types.

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