



MEDLAB CENTRAL
 MEDLAB HAWKES BAY
 MEDLAB WANGANUI
 TLAB GISBORNE

HEALTH PROFESSIONAL GUIDELINE

Sample Collection for SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19)

**Note that this information may be updated
 Please continue to check for the latest version**

18 March 2020

INTRODUCTION

A single nasopharyngeal swab is now recommended - this is a change from previous where two separate swabs were used for two sites. Lower respiratory tract samples are more sensitive in detecting the virus compared to upper respiratory tract samples but are normally only collected in hospital setting.

**Patients should NOT be sent to collection rooms for testing
 or additional blood tests**

SAMPLE TYPES

Nasopharyngeal swab

- Orange swab (fig.1)
- Paediatric white top swab (fig.2) - may be used in place of orange top swab if needed. These are available separately on request

Place IMMEDIATELY into collection tube

- Red top vial (Fig. 3) OR
- Green top Virus Transport tube (fig.4) discard of green top swab

Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



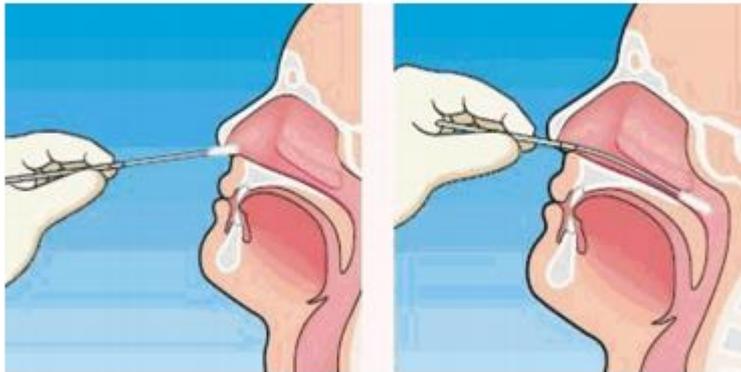
Figure 4



Lower Respiratory Tract (LRT) samples –2 of each if possible (to include routine culture) e.g. Sputum, BAL, Endotracheal secretions collected into yellow top urine pottles

SAMPLE COLLECTION**Nasopharyngeal swab**

1. Insert swab into one nostril
2. Introduce the swab **gently** and push it forwards with gentle downwards pressure on the lower nasal floor, to the posterior wall of the nasopharynx. Rotate the swab twice before gently removing. **Sample via one nostril only**



3. Place the swab into the red top vial fluid and carefully break off the shaft at the break point
4. Close the lid tightly
5. Label sample vial with patient first and last names, NHI number, date of birth and date of collection
6. Place the sample vial in a separate plastic specimen bag, then double-bag for protection against spillage
7. Deliver to the laboratory as soon as possible or store at 4⁰C if delay is expected

REQUEST FORM MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING**NOTE THAT IF THESE DETAILS ARE NOT PROVIDED
TESTING MAY BE DELAYED OR REJECTED**

1. Contact details of the requester in case follow up information is required or for critical results
2. Clearly indicate testing required – COVID-19
3. Respiratory panel PCR can be performed on the same sample but has to be requested specifically on request form and is generally only appropriate for hospitalised patients.
4. Request forms are to be filled out carefully and **MUST** include:
 - a. clinical symptoms including onset date
 - b. relevant patient history
 - c. relevant travel or exposure history including date

SAFETY

COVID-19 samples

1. Use appropriate Personal Protective Equipment as recommended by Public Health
2. Specimen shall be sent in double biohazard bag with request form placed in the **OUTER** pocket of the biohazard bag.
3. Specimen should be delivered to the nearest laboratory, by hand or courier, in a chillybin or rigid, leak-proof outer container, or as instructed by Public Health.
4. Inform the laboratory that SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 samples are on their way.
5. DO NOT send to the laboratory via Hospital Lamson tube

ALL OTHER SAMPLES FROM PATIENT WITH POSSIBLE OR CONFIRMED COVID-19

1. Clearly indicate on the **REQUEST FORM** that the patient has possible/confirmed COVID-19. This is to ensure that appropriate biosafety measures are taken during sample processing.
2. Specimen shall be sent in double biohazard bag with request form placed in the **OUTER** pocket of the biohazard bag.
3. Specimen should be delivered to the nearest laboratory, by hand or courier, in a chillybin or rigid, leak-proof outer container, or as instructed by Public Health.
4. DO NOT send samples to the laboratory via Hospital Lamson tube