
Nasopharyngeal Specimen Collection for COVID-19

- I. Applicable patients: Patients who have received a referral or order from a clinician (primary care, local health department, medical control physician) for specimen collection.
- II. Collection Procedure for Nasal Pharyngeal Sampling:
 - A. Don appropriate PPE
 - i. N95 Mask
 - ii. Gown
 - iii. Gloves
 - iv. Eye protection
 - B. Place patient in seated position
 - C. Tilt patient's head back slightly to visualize nasal passages
 - D. Ask patient to remove face mask and close eyes
 - E. **Gently insert swab along nasal septum, just above the floor of the nasal passage, to the nasopharynx**
 - i. Stop when resistance is met
 - ii. Do not force swab further
 - iii. If you detect resistance to the passage of the swab, back off and try reinserting it at a different angle, closer to the floor of the nasal canal.
 - iv. The swab should reach a depth equal to the distance from the nostrils to the outer opening of the ear.
 - F. Rotate swab several times (keep in passage 10 seconds)
 - G. Gently remove swab while rotating
 - H. Place swab into collection tube according to directions
 - i. Place swab into tube before breaking stick
 - ii. Tighten cap securely
 - I. Have patient reapply face mask
- III. Packaging procedure:
 - A. Label tube
 - i. Patient name
 - ii. Patient DOB
 - iii. Source
 - B. Place tube in plastic bag with absorbent material
 - C. Place sample in 95kPa bag
 - D. Place bagged sample on ice pack
 - E. Follow instructions according to referral source or ordering physician for shipping or delivery.
- IV. Key Information:
 - A. Uncomfortable procedure, be gentle with patient
 - B. Questions or issues with packaging should be handled by referral source, according to directions on collection materials provided

Additional Information and Video: <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMvcm2010260>

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