

NCSLPH Clinical Specimen Storage and Shipping

Clinical specimens for testing at the NCSLPH should be shipped within 24 hours of collection.

When shipping must be delayed (e.g., inclement weather, courier closures), guidelines are given below on proper storage and shipping of common specimen types. Please see our [SCOPE](#) for detailed guidance.

	If shipping immediately	If shipping is delayed
COVID-19 + Flu PCR	≤ 72 hours	❄️ DRY ICE REQUIRED ❄️
Legionella Clinical	≤ 3 days	❄️ DRY ICE REQUIRED ❄️
CHIKV, EEE, LACV, SLE, WEE, WNV	≤ 2 days	❄️ DRY ICE REQUIRED ❄️
Dengue (DENV)	≤ 5 days	❄️ DRY ICE REQUIRED ❄️
Hepatitis A (HAV)	≤ 5 days	❄️ DRY ICE REQUIRED ❄️
Hepatitis B (HBV)	≤ 4 days	❄️ DRY ICE REQUIRED ❄️
Hepatitis C (HCV)	≤ 5 days	❄️ DRY ICE REQUIRED ❄️
HIV	≤ 5 days	❄️ DRY ICE REQUIRED ❄️
HIV/HCV	≤ 5 days	❄️ DRY ICE REQUIRED ❄️
Measles/Mumps PCR*	≤ 3 days	❄️ DRY ICE REQUIRED ❄️
Measles Serology*	≤ 3 days	❄️ DRY ICE REQUIRED ❄️
Rickettsia + Ehrlichia	≤ 3 days	❄️ DRY ICE REQUIRED ❄️
Rubella IgG	≤ 5 days	❄️ DRY ICE REQUIRED ❄️
Syphilis RPR	≤ 5 days	❄️ DRY ICE REQUIRED ❄️
Syphilis TP	≤ 5 days	❄️ DRY ICE REQUIRED ❄️
Bordetella Culture	≤ 3 days	
Bordetella PCR	≤ 7 days	
HSV/VZV NAAT	≤ 5 days	
Hemoglobin Whole Blood	≤ 6 days	
Blood Lead	≤ 43 days, including prenatal	
Micro Reference Cultures	Ship ambient as soon as possible	
Legionella Culture	Ship ambient as soon as possible	
NBS Dried Blood Spots (DBS)	≤ 14 days, avoid excessive heat and/or humidity	
Hemoglobin Screening DBS	≤ 14 days	
Neisseria Culture	Must be shipped ambient as soon as possible, see SCOPE for <i>N. gonorrhoeae</i> subculture details	
BTEP* and CTAT*	Call 919-807-8600 (BTEP) or 919-602-2481 (CTAT) prior to any submission for guidance on collection, labeling, packaging, and shipment	
Chlamydia/Gonorrhea TMA	May be received cold or ambient, ≤ 28 days	
Enteric Bacteriology	Varies by specimen type, see SCOPE for details	
Mycobacteriology (TB)	Varies by specimen type, see SCOPE for details	
Mycology	Varies by specimen type, see SCOPE for details	
Parasitology	Varies by specimen type, see SCOPE for details	
Rabies	Ship cold ASAP, freezing not recommended	
Viral Culture	Varies by specimen type, see SCOPE for details	

❄️ Refrigerate specimens 2-8°C post collection. Specimens must be received cold (2-8°C) on frozen ice packs within the number of hours/days as indicated in the chart from time of collection.

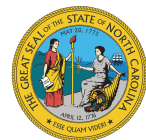
❄️ Freeze specimens at ≤ -70°C post collection. Ship overnight via commercial courier on dry ice.

❄️ Freeze specimens at ≤ -20°C post collection. Ship overnight via commercial courier on dry ice.

* Submission requires prior approval

🟡 Store and ship at ambient temperature. Specimens must be received within the number of hours/days as indicated in the chart from time of collection.

🟡 Unique requirements, refer to SCOPE



NC Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Public Health
North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health
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