COVID-19 & Influenza Specimen Collection and Shipment

North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health

All COVID-19 & Influenza specimens submitted to the NCSLPH must meet the testing criteria on our website and be collected safely. The following guidance applies only to the NCSLPH.

◆ *Failure to follow submission guidelines may result in specimen rejection.*

Specimen Collection

◆ The following are acceptable specimen types:
    Nasopharyngeal (NP) swab
    Oropharyngeal (OP) swab
    Nasal swab

Use a synthetic tipped, sterile swab of appropriate size with a plastic or metal shaft. Do not use a calcium alginate swab or one with a wood shaft.

◆ The following are acceptable media types:
    Viral Transport Media (VTM)
    Universal Transport Media (UTM)

◆ Label the vial containing the swab completely:
    Swab Type
    Patient Name
    Date of Birth   *Or any 2 unique identifiers*
    Date of Collection

◆ Store properly until shipment:
    Refrigerate at 2-8° C for up to 72 hours
    Freeze ≤ -70° C for longer storage

◆ Completely fill out the COVID-19 submittal form online in our ETOR portal.

Specimen Shipment

◆ Specimen collection supplies and packaging and shipping supplies can be ordered online from NCSLPH Online Supply Ordering System

◆ All specimens shipped via commercial courier must meet Category B, UN3373 requirements

    UN3373

◆ Keep cold. Ship refrigerated specimens on frozen cold packs and any ≤ -70° C frozen specimens on dry ice (the latter following IATA regulations). If shipping using a medical courier, no cold packs are required but specimens must be refrigerated.

◆ Label the package completely:

> Attention: Virology/Serology Unit
> North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health
> 4312 District Drive
> Raleigh, NC 27607-5490

◆ Specimen deliveries are only received at the State Lab loading dock from:
    8 a.m. - 5 p.m., Monday - Friday
    8 a.m. - noon, Saturday

Result Reporting

Results are posted electronically to our CELR and ETOR systems, tied to the submitter's EIN number. Visit our website for account setup and tutorials.