

# COVID-19 Specimen Collection and Shipment

## North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health

All COVID-19 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.

Facilities can request collection supplies online, and please see the [NCDHHS website](#) for details. Local health departments can use this system or continue to request materials, including NCSLPH Specimen Collection Kits, through their County Emergency Management. These Collection Kits must be returned to the NCSLPH for testing.

◆ *Failure to do any of the following may result in specimen rejection.*

### Specimen Collection

#### The following are acceptable specimen types:

- Nasopharyngeal (NP) swab
- Oropharyngeal (OP) swab
- Nasal swab
- Mid-turbinate 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:

- VTM (*NCSLPH or Commercial, i.e., Remel*)
- MTM (*i.e., PrimeStore*)
- Saline

#### ◆ Label the vial containing the swab completely:

- Swab Type
  - Patient Name
  - Date of Birth
  - Date of Collection
- Or any 2 unique identifiers

#### Store properly until shipment:

- Refrigerate at 2-8° C for up to 72 hours
- Freeze at -70° C for longer storage

Completely fill out the COVID-19 submittal form online in our [ETOR portal](#).

### Specimen Shipment

- ◆ All specimens should be packaged and shipped as a [UN3373 Category B, Biological Substance](#)



**Ship overnight** using commercial courier (UPS, FedEx) or private courier (e.g., hospital couriers). Do not use the State Courier.

- ◆ **Keep cold.** Ship refrigerated specimens on frozen cold packs and any -70°C frozen specimens on dry ice (the latter following IATA regulations).
- ◆ **Label the package completely.**

**Attention: Virology/Serology Unit, COVID-19**  
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.

