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
  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 *(i.e., Remel M4RT)*
  MTM *(i.e., PrimeStore)*

◆ **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

◆ **All specimens shipped commercially should be packaged UN3373 Category B, Biological Substance**

  UN3373

  If using a private courier or LHD medical courier, follow pack and ship requirements of the courier.

◆ **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.