

Procedure for Collecting an Anterior Nares Nasal Swab

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PURPOSE

To allow Public Health Nurses working for the Vermont Department of Health and other healthcare professionals working for the Vermont Department of Health as allowed by state law, to test for the presence of COVID-19 in the nasal passages of an infectious or potential infectious adult or child (12 month of age or older).

PROCEDURE

A. Assessment

1. Obtain information regarding who to perform specimen collection upon. Verify that the individual(s) have been evaluated and that testing for COVID-19 is indicated and has been approved by the Vermont Department of Health.

B. Preparation & Verification

1. Review Medical Order for Anterior Nares Nasal Swab found in the Clinical Procedure Manual on the HAN SharePoint.
2. Review precautions for [personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#) required for doing an Anterior Nares Nasal Swab or for teaching and observing an Anterior Nares Nasal Swab.
3. Ensure you have reviewed the videos in [Donning and Doffing PPE](#) and are familiar with this procedure.
4. Review and understand all [lab collection, handling, storing and shipping instructions](#) for the specimen(s).
5. Assure and review a plan for doing specimen collection on the individual or individuals to be tested.
 - Agreed upon process on what will occur and where you and the individual(s) to be testing will be
 - Arranged time, date and location

- Assure all equipment needed is available (pen, chair, hand sanitizer or hand washing location, PPE, paperwork) that may be need as part of testing.
- 6. Verify that children under the age of 18 have a parent or guardian present or that there is a signed consent form from the parent or guardian.
- 7. If going to do specimen collection at a worksite or home, review the Vermont Department of Health's [Home-Based Care Procedure and Protocol](#) found in the Clinical Procedure Manual on the HAN Share Point and follow guidance on safety and best practices.
- 8. Make a plan for yourself regarding going to do onsite testing that includes safety considerations, driving needs, appropriate self-care and cleaning post visit (leaving hand sanitizer by car, along with wipes for use after exiting facility but prior to entering vehicle).

C. Testing

Performed by Healthcare Personnel

1. Assure you have equipment needed for testing.
 - Personal protective equipment: N-95, eye protection, gloves, gown, hand sanitizer.
 - Viral laboratory collection kit for Anterior Nares Nasal Swab
 - Face mask for patient (to give them if they do not have their own)
 - Lab requisition form, clinical/consent form, and handouts applicable to the testing situation.
 - Tissues
 - Plan for waste disposal
 - Hand sanitizer or access to hand washing station
 - Cleaner and paper towels or Oxivir wipes
2. Assure you understand how to complete all paperwork including labeling of samples to be collected.
3. If entering a facility assure that face mask or N95 mask and gloves are donned before entering the facility. Don complete PPE before entering area where testing will occur.
4. Verify with lead on site the plan to test individual(s) and ask questions as needed to make sure you are comfortable with the specimen collection plan.
5. Don complete PPE before entering area where testing will occur.
6. Greet patient and verify that they are the correct patient, have been identified to be tested for COVID-19 and agree to the testing for COVID-19. Ask patient not to touch you.
7. Review specimen collection process and obtain verification that they want to be tested.

8. Position patient so they are comfortable.
9. Ask patient to make sure their mask is covering their mouth but not their nose. Ask them to adjust the mask until nasal passages are visible.
10. Instruct the patient that if they feel they might need to move, they should sit on their hands.
11. Remove the sterile swab from the packaging and collect sample.
 - a. Gently insert swab into the nostril at least 1 cm (0.5 inch) and firmly sample the nasal membrane by rotating the swab and leaving in place for 10 to 15 seconds.
 - b. Gently remove the swab and sample the other nostril with the same swab.
 - c. Swab the second nostril using the same technique
 - d. Insert swab into tube containing viral transport medium and break it at the score mark on the shaft so it does not protrude above the rim of the container.
 - e. Make sure liquid medium covers the swab tip. Ensure the cap of the viral transport media tube is securely tightened.
 - f. Assure that sample is labeled with client name, DOB, and date/time collected.
 - g. Place specimen in transport container
12. Assure that patient is ok and received and understands guidance regarding recommendations while awaiting test results; [recommendations for those who are sick or potentially sick with COVID-19](#).
13. Gloves must be changed, and hand hygiene performed between each patient tested. If client touched any part/piece of PPE, that piece of PPE should be changed. Discard PPE following appropriate procedures and place in bag in trash receptacle provided. When testing is complete or leaving the clinical area please remove all PPE and discard as appropriate.
14. Wash hands or use Hand Sanitizer between clients and when testing is complete or if leaving the clinic area.
15. Follow lab instructions for appropriate storage and shipment of specimens.
16. Document testing by completing the clinic/consent form and holding the form(s) on file as part of the Infectious Disease Epi case investigation documentation or at the District Office following HIPPA procedures.

Specimen Collection Performed by Patient Under the Supervision of Healthcare Personnel or Teaching Anterior Nares Nasal Swab:

1. Assure you have all equipment needed for testing.

- a. Personal protective equipment: N-95, eye protection, gloves, gown, hand sanitizer. You may not need all of this but if patient can not perform the testing themselves you may have to do the test for them and at that time this PPE would be needed
 - b. Viral laboratory collection kit for Anterior Nares Nasal Swab
 - c. Face mask for patient (to give them if they do not have their own)
 - d. Lab requisition form, clinical/consent form, and handouts applicable to the testing situation
 - e. Tissues
 - f. Plan for waste disposal
 - g. Hand sanitizer or access to hand washing station
 - h. Cleaner and paper towels or Oxivir wipes
2. Assure understand how to complete all the paperwork required.
3. Assure that there is a plan for greeting and explaining procedure to the patient while you remain a distance of 6 feet or more away.
4. Assure that a suitable location for observing the specimen collection has been determined. Whenever possible use a window, door, or electronic method to watch the patient test themselves to assure proper technique.
5. Assure that N95 mask is on and don clean gloves and review the procedure with the patient. This includes all steps of the procedure.
 - a. Patient will perform hand hygiene prior to specimen collection
 - b. Patient will open swab package
 - c. Patient will gently insert swab into the nostril using a gentle rotation. Patient will push the swab until they meet with slight resistance and they are about 1 cm into the nostril and against the nasal membrane
 - d. Patient will rotate the swab several times against the nasal wall for 10 to 15 seconds.
 - e. Patient will repeat in the second nostril
 - f. Patient will gently remove the swab and insert swab into tube containing viral transport medium located in tube rack and either place top on the tube or break the shaft in the indicated spot so that the swab does not protrude above the rim of the container
 - g. How to label specimen collection tube
 - h. Wash hands or use hand sanitizer
 - i. Wipe down and/or clean specimen collection tube
6. Verify that they understand the instructions to do the testing themselves and answer any questions they have. Verify they still want to be tested.

7. With clean gloves on, place testing kit near door or location where testing will occur. Whenever possible use a window, door, or electronic method to watch the patient test themselves to assure proper technique.
8. Ask patient to go to the location where sample will be collected and observed.
9. Place testing kit near door or location.
10. Ask the patient to place the specimen collection container outside their door. Healthcare personnel should maintain a distance of at least 6 feet when this is done, farther if possible.
11. Once patient is back in the testing area healthcare personnel (who is wearing gloves) will pick the specimen up, ensure it is properly labeled and place it in the appropriate packaging.
12. Remove gloves and discard them appropriately in a trash receptacle.
13. Healthcare personnel should wipe down cell phone if used to communicate with patient and exterior of specimen packaging.
14. Perform hand hygiene using hand sanitizer.
15. Ensure that laboratory testing requisition form is completed, and specimen is packaged, stored, and transported according to the laboratory and manufacturer specifications.
16. Document testing on the clinic/consent form and hold the form on file as part of the Infectious Disease Epi case investigation documentation or at the District Office following HIPPA procedures.

Adapted from:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/lab/guidelines-clinical-specimens.html> Accessed 6/22/2020

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/control-recommendations.html#collection> Accessed 6/22/2020

<https://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/clinical/diagnostic-testing/specimen-collection.html> Accessed 6/22/2020

https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/PHL_Micro%20449%20Rev%201%20Feb%202020%20Specimen%20Collection%20Instructions%20for%20Coronavirus%20nCoV.pdf