

Guidance on Sample Collection for Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) Testing as of Jan 30, 2020

Diagnostic testing for 2019-nCoV is available at the BCCDC Public Health Laboratory (PHL) and will be available in the coming weeks at front line laboratories.

Testing is available for patients with compatible symptoms (e.g. fever, cough, or difficulty breathing) **AND** history of travel to affected areas of China within **two weeks prior** to illness onset or other index of suspicion (e.g., contact with an ill person with such travel history).

Consult your local Medical Health Officer for concerns/questions or guidance regarding the investigation and management of cases suspected of 2019-nCoV infection.

NP and throat swabs should be performed using contact and droplet precautions with surgical mask and eye protection, and do not require the use of an N95 respirator.

If feasible collect **BOTH** a Nasopharyngeal (NP) swab **AND** a Throat swab or sputum sample:

Specimen	Container	Collection
Nasopharyngeal washing or swab	COPAN with UNIVERSAL TRANSPORT MEDIA (UTM)** These containers may be with red or blue tops and contain a pink liquid	NP collection kit includes flocked swab and a tube of transport medium. • Insert the swab approximately 6 cm with a slow, steady motion along the floor of the nose until a point of resistance is met (2/3 of the distance from nostrils to external opening of ear). Rotate the swab several times and then withdraw the swab. • Insert the swab into the transport vial, snap off the stem and close tightly before sending to laboratory.
Throat swab	COPAN with UNIVERSAL TRANSPORT MEDIA (UTM)** These containers may be with red or blue tops and contain a pink liquid	• Swab back of throat near tonsils (if present) using the collection swab • Insert the swab into the transport vial, snap off the stem and close tightly before sending to laboratory.
Sputum	Sterile container	• Collection requires a wide mouth screw cap jar. • Instruct the patient not to spit into the sample container, but to take a deep breath and cough directly into the container.

These are the same collection devices routinely used for NP swabs for flu/other respiratory virus testing or skin/mucosal swabs for HSV/VZV viral testing.

UNSUITABLE collection devices systems will be **REJECTED** and delay testing. These include: COPAN E-swabs for Pertussis testing, bacterial throat swabs for Group A Streptococcus testing, dry swabs, etc.



Please use the Virology Requisition form and write that 2019-nCoV testing is being requested, OR add a special label to the requisition indicating the need for nCoV testing.

<http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Forms/Labs/VI%20Req.pdf>

Samples should be submitted as routine, through your local diagnostic Microbiology Laboratories.

For up to date information on Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) please go to:

[http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/coronavirus-\(novel\)](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/coronavirus-(novel))