

Collection of a Nasopharyngeal Swab for COVID-19

March 18, 2020

Purpose: To outline the procedure for obtaining nasopharyngeal swab for respiratory infection testing, including COVID-19 for patients or persons of interest (PUI).

Collecting nasopharyngeal swab is an important tool in the diagnosis of a variety of upper and lower respiratory tract infections including influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19 virus). The quality of the specimen collection is critical, and the correct collection of the specimen is directly linked to the sensitivity of the test.

Definitions:

- Persons Under Investigation (PUI): Patient whose nasal/oral swab results for the COVID-19 virus are not yet completed and available.
- COVID-19 positive patient: Patient whose nasal/oral swabs are positive for the COVID-19 virus.
- Aerosolizing procedures: Those procedures that may stimulate coughing or dispersing of respiratory droplets by a COVID-19 positive patient or a PUI. Common examples may include:
 - Intubation
 - Nasal, tracheal, or oropharyngeal suctioning
 - BiPAP
 - Nebulizer treatments
- Disinfecting wipes: Pre-moistened towelettes that are used to clean surfaces and which may or may not contain bleach.

Materials:

For respiratory viruses - universal transport media (UTM) with Minitip FLOCKED swab.

- Use the FLOCKED swab for any viral respiratory test (for example, influenza)
- Check expiration date prior to use
- Do NOT use bacterial flocced swabs

Procedure:

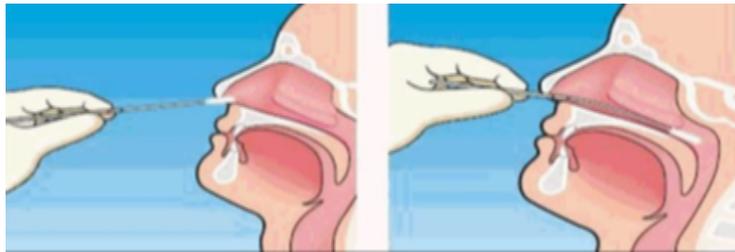
1. Verify provider order.
2. Ensure that all infection prevention & control steps are followed including:
 - a. Hand hygiene before and after the procedure and before and after the patient encounter
 - b. Apply precautions based on the patient's isolation status and don appropriate PPE which includes surgical mask, eye shield/goggles, gloves, and gown. Use N95/respirator



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mask as already indicated for patient as per already determined precaution status and patients with potential for aerosolization during the nasopharyngeal swab specimen collection procedure.

3. Introduce yourself to the patient; verify the correct patient using two identifiers/patient verification procedure.
4. Explain the procedure to the patient.
5. If the patient has nasal congestion or a moderate-large amount of rhinorrhea, ask them to clear their nose into a tissue first.
6. Tilt the patient's head back slightly (at 70 degrees) and ask them to close their eyes, if possible.
7. Collect the nasopharyngeal swab from the patient using the flocked swab.
 - a. Loosen the top of the culture swab tube so that the swab can be removed easily.
 - b. Insert the Minitip Flocked swab into one nostril straight back (not upwards) and horizontally PARALLEL to the palate until resistance is met by contact with the nasopharynx (see image below).



- c. Rotate the swab several times and hold in place for 5-10 seconds.
 - d. Remove the swab and insert into the universal transport medium, breaking off the swab handle at the scored line so it fits in the vial.
 - e. Place the cap on the specimen's tube, label it with the appropriate patient information, and send immediately to the lab.
8. Offer the patient a facial tissue to blow nose, if needed.
9. Use the disinfectant wipes to clean surfaces, as necessary.
10. Document the procedure and patient condition accordingly.