

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

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:
 - Viral Transport Media (VTM)
 - Universal Transport Media (UTM)
- ◆ 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 ≤ -70° C for longer storage
- ◆ Completely fill out the Virology submission form ([DHHS-3431](#)), write "COVID-19 testing" under "other" in the "Infectious Agent(s) Suspected or Test(s) Requested" section at the bottom of the form.

Specimen Shipment

- ◆ Specimen collection supplies and packaging and shipping supplies can be ordered online from [NCSLPH Online Supply Ordering System](#)
- ◆ All specimens shipped via commercial courier must meet [Category B, UN3373 requirements](#)
- ◆ 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](#), tied to the submitter's EIN number. Visit our [website](#) for account setup and tutorials.

