

Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

COVID-19 NASOPHARYNGEAL AND OROPHARYNGEAL SWABBING PROCEDURE

Purpose: To outline the procedure to obtain nasopharyngeal (NP) or oropharyngeal (OP) swab specimens for respiratory infection testing. Collecting NP or OP swabs is an important tool in the diagnosis of 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.

Only Clinical staff who have received documented training/instruction on the process of obtaining NP or OP swab will perform NP or OP specimen collection for COVID-19 testing. When collecting NP or OP swab from a patient with possible COVID-19 infection, the following will occur:

Procedure:

Ensure that all infection prevention & control steps are followed including: Hand hygiene before and after the procedure and use of personal protective equipment to include mask, eye protection, gown, and gloves.

- The authorized provider will give a written or verbal/telephonic order for NP or OP specimen collection to test for COVID-19.
- The clinical staff will document the order in the appropriate laboratory template in the electronic patient health record (EPHR).
- The clinician or nurse will perform the specimen collection in a single room in the dispensary with the door closed. Where a negative air pressure room is available, the clinical staff will utilize the negative air pressure room.
- The clinical staff and custody officer in the room will wear full personal protective equipment (PPE) to include an N95 or higher-level respirator (or surgical facemask with face shields if a respirator is not available), eye protection, gloves, and a gown.
- The number of clinical staff and custody officers present during the procedure will be limited to only those essential for patient care and procedure support.
- The inmate will present to the dispensary in a surgical mask preferably or sneeze guard if the mask is not readily available for droplet exposure protection.
- The inmate will remain in the mask until the clinical staff is ready to obtain the specimen.

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- The clinical staff will pull the patient's mask down to cover the mouth while obtaining the NP specimen from the upper naso-pharynx or will pull the patient's mask up to cover the nose while obtaining OP specimen from the oropharynx.
- Specimen collection is done by swabbing the upper respiratory nasopharyngeal (NP) or the throat (OP) utilizing a Dacron-tipped plastic swab and immediately placing the specimen in universal transport media (Speedy#510) obtained from either Maryland Department of Health (MDH) or private labs (BioReference); Ensure the tube is tightly closed, and refrigerate at 2-8 C in the lab-designated refrigerator.
- Label specimen with patient's name, SID number, date of birth, and facility and follow the directions on the specimen from the specific laboratory.
- If the test swab is from BioReference, place the swab in the GREEN specimen bag and label with "COVID-19" and submit to Bio Reference. Turnaround time is 3 days for the results. Methodology of testing is Real-Time RT-PCR.
- If the test kit is from MDH, follow the instruction provided by MDH for requesting COVID-19 specimen testing and packaging specimens for shipment. The completed laboratory requisition form (MDH 4676 Infectious Agents Culture/Detection form) must accompany each specimen.
- Follow the contact process for the courier services identified for the specific testing laboratory used ie BioReference and MDH. Post the courier number and pick up times in all of the DPSCS Dispensaries.
- Inventory of testing to include the # of kits received, number utilized date and time and roster of the inmates who received the tests will be documented
- Additional testing kits will be determined on an establishment of par levels related to current viral activity.
- Cleaning and disinfecting of the dispensary to include all surfaces will occur after each patient encounter with an approved disinfectant per manufacturer's instructions.
- **Clinical staff will refrain from inducing a cough during the COVID-19 specimen collection and avoid respiratory induced collection specimen.**
- Hand hygiene with soap and water for 20 seconds conducted at a minimum prior to/ after patient contact and prior to/ after NP collection procedure.

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- Safe removal of PPE immediately following the procedure and disposal in a biohazard waste container in the room where the procedure was performed. This PPE post testing cannot be reused.
- Clinical staff will don a clean set of PPE prior to exiting the room and performing any other task.
- Clinical staff will document the Covid-19 testing in the EPHR under the lab section; **a positive result is considered a “critical” lab value.**
- Note: All Covid-19 testing results, positive, negative, and inconclusive, will be reported to the respective state health departments through Electronic Laboratory Reporting per private lab (BioReference) and Corizon Infection Control staff to MDH independently.

***Corizon Infectious Disease Director will incorporate all testing for COVID-19 conducted on inmates and detainees as part of the COVID-19 daily report by inmate name, facility, SID number, testing date, result date and outcome.**