



Indiana University Health

DIVISION OF CLINICAL MICROBIOLOGY  
DEPARTMENT OF PATHOLOGY AND LABORATORY MEDICINE  
Indiana University Health  
Indianapolis, IN 46202

# Interim Guidelines for Testing Patients for COVID-19

*Revised March 13, 2020*

Currently, the IU Health Pathology Laboratory (IUHPL) will refer clinical specimens for COVID-19 testing to the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH). If testing is declined by ISDH, specimens can be sent to ARUP Laboratories upon the approval of Infectious Disease and Infection Prevention. The following information is meant to assist IU Health care providers with COVID-19 test ordering, specimen collection, and submission of specimens to IUHPL for routing to ISDH or, if necessary, ARUP.

In all cases, follow ISDH guidelines when deciding to perform COVID-19 testing. ISDH recommends INFLUENZA TESTING PRIOR TO OR CONCURRENTLY WITH COVID-19 testing in order to rule out influenza virus infection. Information regarding when to test a patient is available: <https://www.in.gov/isdh/28470.htm>.



**NURSING/PROVIDER NOTE:** Submission of specimens for COVID-19 testing to ISDH requires an AUTHORIZATION NUMBER provided during the Epidemiological Consultation between the ordering provider and an ISDH official. For more information, see below.



**NURSING/PROVIDER NOTE:** This is an evolving document that is being updated frequently as guidelines change. Users of this document **MUST refer to the ONLINE VERSION** in which recent changes are highlighted.



**NURSING/PROVIDER NOTE:** Specimens must be sent in a leak-proof container that is placed within a sealed biohazard specimen bag. Specimen leakage is a criterion for rejection.



**NURSING/PROVIDER NOTE:** Do not place specimens for other types of testing from the same patient in the same sealed biohazard specimen bag as a specimen for COVID-19 testing. Specimens for COVID-19 testing must be grouped separately in a sealed biohazard specimen bag, as these specimens are destined for a different testing facility.

## **ISDH TESTING: SPECIMEN COLLECTION**

- I. Prior to specimen collection.
  1. Collect the following information from the patient:
    - Name and date of birth
    - Travel history (including dates of travel, locations, and mode[s] of travel)
    - Current signs and symptoms
    - Date of illness onset with signs and symptoms
    - Current patient status
  2. Contact the ISDH Epidemiology Resource Center for epidemiological consultation and test authorization.
    - For authorization between 8:15 am – 4:45 pm, Monday – Friday:
      - Call (317) 233-7125
    - For authorization at other times, contact the ISDH Duty Officer:
      - Call (317) 233-1325
    - If ISDH authorizes testing at their facility:
      - Write **AUTHORIZATION NUMBER** on **PAPER CLINICAL PATHOLOGY TEST REQUISITION** (<https://cdn.iuhealth.org/resources/Clinical-Pathology-Laboratory-Test-Request-Form.pdf?mtime=20180221134929>) that must be submitted with a specimen. Failure to include the Authorization Number will lead to delays in testing!
      - If ISDH insists on picking up samples directly from a facility (hospital, clinic, etc.), this is acceptable. However, please contact IUHPL Clinical Microbiology (317) 491-6999 about this process deviation and provide Patient name, MRN, Authorization Number, as well as submitted Specimen Types. This information is very

important in order to correctly track results for providers.

- For information regarding ISDH Specimen Requirements, Collection, Transport and Ordering proceed to Section II.
- If ISDH declines testing, please proceed to Section III for ARUP Diagnostics Specimen Requirements, Collection, Transport and Ordering information.

II. ISDH Specimen Requirements, Collection, and Transport:

1. Collect the following specimens:

Specimen Type	Collection Device	Requirement
Nasopharyngeal (NP) swab and Oropharyngeal (OP) Swab	UTM (or viral transport media)  If both swabs are collected, they can be transported in <u>ONE</u> viral transport medium tube.	Required
Sputum OR Bronchoalveolar lavage fluid OR Tracheal Aspirate	Sterile, leak-proof cup	Optional
Serum	Gold-top VACUTAINER	Optional
Nasopharyngeal wash/aspirate OR Nasal Wash	Sterile, leak-proof cup	Optional

For specimen collection instructions, please see:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/lab/guidelines-clinical-specimens.html> and Appendices A (NP swab collection) and B (OP swab collection)

2. For ISDH test ordering, use the PAPER CLINICAL PATHOLOGY TEST REQUISITION
  - Affix patient's IU Health Registration Label to the requisition
  - List ordering physician contact information
  - In the "Other Tests" box (lower right corner), write "COVID-2019 TESTING" and INCLUDE THE ISDH-PROVIDED AUTHORIZATION NUMBER
3. Contact the IUHPL Division of Clinical Microbiology (317) 491-6999 and provide the following information to Microbiology personnel for specimen tracking purposes:
  - Patient name and medical record number
  - Submitter's name and phone number
4. Specimens transported within the IU Health System do not require special packaging; instead, package specimens as you would for routine testing.
  - Affix patient's Registration Label to each specimen submitted for COVID-19 testing.
  - Specimens for other types of testing cannot be included within the same biohazard bag as specimens for COVID-19 testing.
  - The specimen container must be checked to ensure that it does not leak. Specimen leakage or container breakage, such as during the process of

pneumatic tube transportation, constitute criteria for specimen rejection.

- The container must be placed within a biohazard bag that is sealed.
- Print off and affix Appendix C of this document to the front of the specimen bag and hand-deliver specimens to hospital laboratories.
- **Academic Health Center (AHC):** tube specimens to Division of Clinical Microbiology (tube station number: 952). If tube system is not available, follow your facility's tube system downtime process.
- **Other IU Health Hospitals:** Deliver specimens and paper test requisition to your local laboratory to be sent to Division of Clinical Microbiology. It is acceptable to use pneumatic tube system to deliver specimens to each local laboratory.

## **ARUP TESTING: SPECIMEN COLLECTION**

### III. **ARUP** Specimen Requirements, Collection, and Transport:

1. All non-ISDH COVID-19 test requests must be triaged and approved by the local infectious disease doctors and/or Infection Prevention team.
2. ARUP is the IU Health Pathology Laboratory's preferred reference lab.
3. Collect the following specimens:

Specimen Type	Collection Device	Requirement
Nasopharyngeal (NP) swab <u>AND</u> Oropharyngeal swab. (Place both swabs in one collection tube.)	UTM (or viral transport media)	Required

For specimen collection instructions, please see:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/lab/guidelines-clinical-specimens.html>  
and Appendix A (NP swab collection) and Appendix B (OP swab collection)

4. For **ARUP** test ordering, use the PAPER CLINICAL PATHOLOGY TEST REQUISITION
  - Affix patient's IU Health Registration Label to the requisition
  - List ordering physician contact information
  - In the "Other Tests" box (lower right corner), write "**ARUP COVID-2019 TESTING**"
  - Additionally, fill out ARUP's requisition. Link to the form:  
[https://ltd.aruplab.com/api/ltd/pdf/6?\\_ga=2.269160689.10514184.1583756427-1245141773.1563890202](https://ltd.aruplab.com/api/ltd/pdf/6?_ga=2.269160689.10514184.1583756427-1245141773.1563890202)
5. Send the specimen and paper requisition to your local laboratory to be transported to the **IUHPL Send-Out Testing Department**. It is acceptable to use pneumatic tube system to deliver specimens to each local laboratory.
6. Specimens transported within the IU Health System do not require special packaging; instead, package specimens as you would for routine testing.
  - Affix patient's Registration Label to each specimen submitted for COVID-19 testing.
  - Specimens for other types of testing cannot be included within the same biohazard bag as specimens for COVID-19 testing.

- The specimen container must be checked to ensure that it does not leak. Specimen leakage or container breakage, such as during the process of pneumatic tube transportation, constitute criteria for specimen rejection.
- The container must be placed within a biohazard bag that is sealed.
- **Academic Health Center (AHC):** tube specimens to Division of Clinical Microbiology (tube station number: 952). If tube system is not available, follow your facility's tube system downtime process.
- **Other IU Health Hospitals:** Deliver specimens and paper test requisition to your local laboratory to be sent to Division of Clinical Microbiology. It is acceptable to use pneumatic tube system to deliver specimens to each local laboratory.

## **LABORATORY PERSONNEL: SPECIMEN HANDLING**

- I. For **ISDH** testing:
  1. Submit specimens and paper test requisitions via IUHPL courier or pneumatic tube system to **IUHPL Division of Clinical Microbiology** as soon as possible.
  2. Ship specimens refrigerated (with cold packs).
    - Academic Health Center (AHC): tube specimens to Clinical Microbiology (tube station number: 952). If tube system is not available, follow your facility's tube system downtime process.
    - Other IU Health Hospital Laboratories:
      - Pack specimens under normal specimen packaging for transportation as you would for routine testing.
      - Each local hospital laboratory will contact (317) 491-6000 to request a STAT courier pick-up for delivery to IUHPL Division of Clinical Microbiology.

**AGAIN NOTE: If ISDH insists on picking up samples directly from a facility (hospital, clinic, etc.), it is acceptable. Please contact IUHPL Clinical Microbiology (317) 491-6999 about this process deviation and provide patient name, MRN, authorization number, as well as submitted specimen types to Clinical Microbiology personnel.**

- II. For **ARUP** testing:
  1. Order **Misc. Sendout test (MISC SO)** in Cerner according to ARUP COVID-19 TESTING on the paper test requisition. Note: This is a lab orderable only test.
  2. Enter the following information in the **Order Comment:**
    - ARUP test # 30026378
    - Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)
    - CPT: U0002
    - Specimen type: NP swab or OP swab in UTM/Viral Transport Media
  3. Ship specimen refrigerated (with cold packs)
    - a. Pack specimens under normal specimen packaging guidelines for transportation as you would for routine testing.
    - b. Specimens are sent to IUHPL Send-Out Testing Department on the routine courier runs.

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Please direct questions to Dr. Ryan Relich, Section Director of the IU Health Clinical Virology Laboratory: [rrelich@iupui.edu](mailto:rrelich@iupui.edu).

# Appendix A

## Proper Collection of Nasopharyngeal (NP) Specimens

For COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2), Pertussis, Measles virus, and Respiratory Virus Testing



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Before you begin:

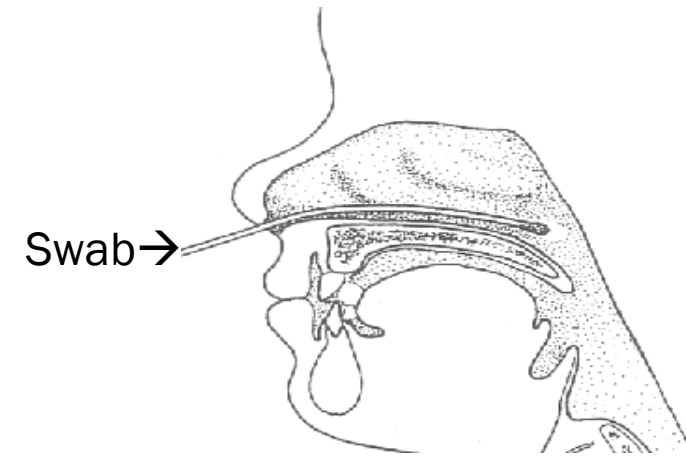
1. Don appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE; gloves, mask, eye protection, gown, etc.)

Collection:

1. Remove the patient's mask.
2. Use the flexible-shaft flocked swab provided in the viral culture/testing collection kit (right, top).
3. Insert the swab into the nasopharynx through the nares by pushing the swab straight back – do not push the swab up (right, bottom).
  - A. The distance from the patient's nose to the ears gives an estimate of the distance the swab should be inserted.
4. Rotate the swab for a few seconds and slowly withdraw the swab with a rotating motion.
5. Break the swab off into the viral transport medium by bending the swab against the inside of the transport tube. The swab should break along the scored line.
6. Cap the transport tube and place it in a specimen bag.

After you're complete:

1. Safely remove PPE and discard in appropriate waste container.
2. Perform hand hygiene.
3. Deliver specimen to the laboratory as soon as possible.





# Appendix B

## Proper Collection of Oropharyngeal (OP) Specimens

For COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) Testing



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Before you begin:

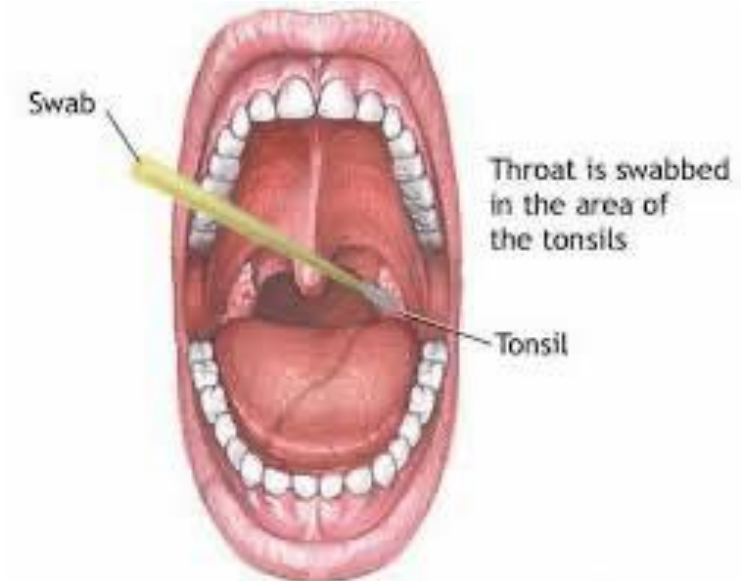
1. Don appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE; gloves, mask, eye protection, gown, etc.)

Collection:

1. Remove the patient's mask.
2. Use the flexible-shaft flocked swab provided in the viral culture/testing collection kit (right, top).
3. Insert the swab into the oropharynx and swab the posterior pharynx and tonsil areas and avoid the tongue (right, bottom).
4. Break the swab off into the viral transport medium by bending the swab against the inside of the transport tube. The swab should break along the scored line.
5. Cap the transport tube and place it in a specimen bag.

After you're complete:

1. Safely remove PPE and discard in appropriate waste container.
2. Perform hand hygiene.
3. Deliver specimen to the laboratory as soon as possible.



## Appendix C

IUHPL Courier or  
Courier Service Team Member:

**DELIVER THIS SPECIMEN DIRECTLY TO**  
**THE IUHPL DIVISION OF CLINICAL**  
**MICROBIOLOGY**

IUHPL 6015 (6<sup>th</sup> Floor)  
Phone: (317) 491-6999

Do **NOT** deliver this package to Central Processing (on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor)