



TYPES OF SAMPLES AND COLLECTION METHODS

Proper Collection of specimens is the most important step in the laboratory diagnosis of diseases. Quality results starts from the quality and integrity of the specimens. Improperly collected specimens may lead to false negative test results. The following specimen collection guidelines should be followed for proper specimen collection.

- Only trained health care worker should be involved in specimen collection.
- Determine if the patient meets the criteria for testing for COVID-19.
- Specimens should be collected as soon as possible once a suspected case is identified regardless of time of symptom onset.
- Consider all the clinical specimens as potentially hazardous / infectious.
- Place each specimen into a separate container labeled with the patient's name and a unique identification number, the collection site, the date and time of collection
- Do not contaminate the outside of the specimen container.
- Do not handle laboratory requisition forms with gloves.
- Personal protective equipment to be provided for sample collection includes:
 - Disposable surgical cap
 - N95 mask
 - Medical protective gown
 - Goggles
 - Face shield
 - Disposable gloves
 - Soap water/ alcohol-based hand-sanitizer
- All Biosafety precautions should be strictly followed during sample collection and packaging.
- For initial diagnostic testing for COVID-19, collection and testing of upper respiratory specimen is recommended.

I. Respiratory Specimens

A. Upper Respiratory Tract

1. **Nasopharyngeal swab/Oropharyngeal (Throat) Collection:** This is the preferred specimen type for RT-PCR due to higher diagnostic sensitivity although OP swabs are also acceptable. If both NP and OP swabs are collected, they should be combined in a single tube to maximize the sensitivity and limit use of testing resources.

Collection Technique.

