
Cotton or synthetic OP or NP swabs may be placed in 1-3mL of sterile saline (0.85 or 0.9%) in a screw cap tube when VTM is not available.

LabCorp’s 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) testing [139900] is available for ordering by physicians or other authorized healthcare providers anywhere in the U.S. The test detects the presence of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, and is for use with patients who meet guidance for evaluation of COVID-19 infection.

LabCorp does not currently collect specimens for COVID-19 testing. Patients for whom testing has been ordered should not be sent to a LabCorp location to have a COVID-19 specimen collected.

LabCorp recommends that specimens be submitted in viral transport media (VTM), when possible. Sterile normal saline (0.85 or 0.9% NaCl) has also been validated by LabCorp to support COVID-19 testing needs in the event of supply shortages. Please note that saline transport is only acceptable for COVID-19 test 139900.

Test ordering info

The test number for 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), NAA is 139900. Test must be ordered, and specimen collected, by a physician or other authorized healthcare provider.

Container

For swabs in viral transport media or ESwab™

Oropharyngeal (OP) samples: swab included in viral transport medium or ESwab is acceptable for submission.

For Nasopharyngeal (NP) samples: use separate NP swab submitted in viral transport medium (kit includes an OP swab that may not be appropriate for NP collection).

Please note: Cotton-tip swab in VTM is not acceptable.

Exact manufacturer of the swab and transport media may vary with supply. Any swab of appropriate size and configuration with a synthetic tip can be used except for calcium alginate tips, swabs with preservatives, and swabs with wood shafts.

Viral transport media acceptable for collection of influenza specimens in 1 mL or 3 mL volumes can be used to transport swabs for COVID-19 testing.

For swabs in saline

OP or NP swabs may be placed in 1-3 mL of sterile saline (0.85 or 0.9%) in a screw cap tube. Do NOT use vacutainer or “pop-top” tubes.

Any swab of appropriate size and configuration with a cotton or synthetic tip can be used except for calcium alginate tips, swabs with preservatives, and swabs with wood shafts.

Causes for rejection

Cotton-tip swabs in UTM/VTM; swabs with calcium alginate; swabs with wooden shafts; refrigerated samples greater than 72 hours old; room temperature swabs greater than 24 hours old; improperly labeled, grossly contaminated, broken or leaking transport device; collection with substances inhibitory to PCR including heparin, hemoglobin, ethanol, EDTA concentrations >0.01M.

Turnaround Time

Current turnaround time for COVID-19 testing is estimated between 3-4 days.

Storage

Ship frozen at -20°C (preferred); refrigerated specimens acceptable (if received for testing within 72 hours of collection); room temperature swabs acceptable (if received within 24 hours of collection).

Sample submission

- Label sample and place in biohazard specimen bag.
- Freeze specimen and keep frozen.
- Submit sample on one requisition, with test code 139900 — COVID-19. Request must include patient’s name, complete address, phone number, and appropriate diagnosis code.
- To avoid delays in turnaround time when requesting multiple tests on frozen samples, please submit separate frozen specimens for each test requested.

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