Guidance for Coronavirus (SARS-nCoV-2, COVID-19) Collection and Testing

Approval for COVID-19 Testing: Must be obtained by calling the Health Care Provider hotline at 1-844-930-3023 only for specimens submitted to the Arkansas Public Health Laboratory (AR-PHL). Do not call for approval for specimens submitted to a private laboratory.

Specimen Collection: Collect one Nasopharyngeal swab (NP) and place the swab in a single vial with 2-3 ml of Viral Transport Media (VTM). If VTM is not available, the following Alternative Transport Media can be used:

- Alternative Transport Media:
  - 1-3 mL Liquid Amies-based Transport Media.
  - Dry swab in 1-3 mL saline (If both Viral & Amies Transport Medias are not available)

- Nasopharyngeal swab (NP): recommend flexible micro swabs.
  - Use only synthetic fiber swabs with plastic shafts. Do not use calcium alginate swabs or swabs with wooden shafts, as they may that inactivate some viruses and inhibit PCR testing. Place the swab immediately into sterile tubes containing 2-3 ml of VTM. Label the specimen collection kit with NP. Please do not use foam tipped swabs or swabs placed in culture media.

- Transport Requirements:
  - Refrigerate specimen at 2-8°C and ship with a cold pack.

Specimen Labelling: Label each specimen with two patient identifiers (name & date of birth) AND indicate the type of specimen (NP).

Test Request Forms: Complete an AR-PHL Miscellaneous Examination Form and a CDC PUI Form.

- Miscellaneous Examination Form:
  - All information is required except the Submitter ID # (if it has not been assigned by the AR-PHL).
Must have the submitting facility’s name and **correct phone and fax number for results** (contact QA for form & questions).

- **PUI CDC Form:**

- Ensure the **Patient Name** and **Date of Birth** on both forms are **correct** and **match** the specimen tube.

- Complete both forms and place in the box with the specimens. Do not place the paperwork inside the bag with the specimens.

**Specimen Shipping:** Ship as Category B Specimen with both forms to the AR-PHL.

   **Arkansas Dept. of Health-Public Health Laboratory**  
   **ATTN: Molecular**  
   **201 South Monroe Street, Little Rock, AR 72205**  
   **OR**

Package as a category B specimen and bring to the nearest local health unit for shipment or AR-PHL Specimen Receiving located at the back of the building (off of Palm Street). Write **ATTN: Molecular** on the outside of the box and your facilities mailing information if you would like your shipping container to be returned. **LHUs cannot accept unpackaged specimens.**

**Turnaround Time:** maximum of seven days, expect results within **48-72 hours**.

- The AR-PHL will notify the submitter of nCoV-2019 results by phone and the physical results will be released by ADH Outbreak Response/Epidemiology.
- Outbreak Response will disseminate information to submitters.
- Respiratory Panel results will be released to the requestor and the submitter (if appropriate fax number is provided).

**NOTE:** Due to the everchanging situation, information is constantly being updated as requirements change, for questions & to verify the most current information contact:

**Outbreak Response:** 501-537-8969 or 1-800 554-5738 (after hours & weekends)

**AR-PHL:** QA Office (501-351-8202, 501-626-0431, or 501-350-8088), Safety Office (501-614-5357), or the Molecular Supervisor (501-661-2454).