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

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 or aluminum shafts. Do not use calcium alginate swabs or swabs with wooden shafts, as they may 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). If your specimen is not properly labeled, it may be rejected.

Test Request Forms: Complete a COVID-19 Test Requisition Form.

- COVID-19 Test Requisition Form:
  - All information is required
    - If your facility doesn’t have a submitter ID, one will be assigned at the PHL
  - Must have the submitting facility’s name and correct phone and fax number for results (contact QA for form or questions, the form is also available on the ADH website).
  - Requestor must be a licensed medical practitioner (i.e. physician, nurse practitioner, etc.)
- Ensure the Patient Name and Date of Birth on form are correct and match the specimen tube.
- Complete form 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 test requisition form 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 7 days, expect results within 48-72 hours.

- The AR-PHL will notify the submitter of nCoV-2019 results by phone/email and the physical results will be released by ADH Outbreak Response/Epidemiology.

NOTE: Information is updated as requirements change, for questions and to verify the most current information contact:

AR-PHL: QA Office

- Angelica Chavez: 501-351-8202
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