

COVID-19 Specimen Collection

Specimens for COVID-19 testing should be collected according to guidelines outlined in the Microbiology Procedure Manual according to what instrument is being used for testing (Biofire, Cepheid, Abbott ID NOW). A nasopharyngeal swab placed in viral transport media is required for rapid testing using both the Biofire (pediatric patients) and Cepheid. Testing performed using the Abbott ID NOW requires a nasal swab (flocked, foam, rayon, or Copan) and collection must be coordinated with the lab to ensure specimen is tested within 30 minutes of collection to maintain viability (See Abbott ID NOW Assay specimen collection instructions below). COVID-19 testing that is referred to UVMCC can be a nasopharyngeal or nasal collection and placed in a viral transport media.

Abbott ID NOW COVID Assay

SPECIMEN COLLECTION AND HANDLING

Preferred specimen is from mid-turbinate.

Nares swab is satisfactory if unable to collect mid-turbinate, however this is not preferred.

Insert dry swab into naris 1-2 cm and firmly sample the nasal membrane by rotating the swab three times and leaving it in place for 10-15 seconds. Sample both naris with the same swab.

It is strongly suggested that self-collecting patients perform collection in front of the mirror so they can make sure they have swabbed the appropriate depth. Also, using a clock so they will accurately sample for the 10-15 second time.

Place swab into a dry swab holder or plain red top tube. Make sure the swab holder/tube is labeled with patient name, DOB, and exact specimen collection time. Ensure the swab fits securely within the tube and the cap is tightly closed.

Swabs need to be transported to the lab within 30 minutes at room temperature [15-30°C]. Swabs received in the lab longer than 30 minutes after collection will be rejected.