

COVID-19 Guidance on Sample Collection and Testing as of Feb 27, 2020

Please ensure that you are using the latest guidance document, available at [http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/coronavirus-\(novel\)](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/coronavirus-(novel))

PHSA Laboratories

BCCDC Public Health Laboratory

A service of the Provincial Health Services Authority

Given the global spread of COVID-19, we are expanding the COVID-19 testing indications. COVID-19 testing is available for patients with e.g. fever, cough, or difficulty breathing at the BCCDC Public Health Laboratory (PHL) and at a number of hospital laboratories in BC.

1) Who to test and why?

a) **Patients with respiratory illness in relation to recent travel from an affected area or, contact with a person known or suspected to be COVID-19 infected.** (Samples will be tested for FLUA/B/RSV and COVID-19).

b) **We are recommending COVID-19 testing for the same patients that you would normally test for FLUA/B/RSV.** (Samples will be tested for FLUA/B/RSV and COVID-19).

c) **Patients who are part of a respiratory outbreak cluster (i.e., within a household or facility).** It is **not necessary to test all cluster members. Testing a maximum of six members from a cluster will identify the cause of most outbreaks.** (Samples will be tested for FLUA/B/RSV and COVID-19).

2) Who to call for advice?

Consult your regional or provincial microbiologist or regional Medical Health Officer.

3) How to protect yourself from a Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) perspective?

Use contact and droplet precautions with a surgical mask and eye protection when collecting a nasopharyngeal or throat swab or sputum. A N95 respirator is recommended for aerosolizing procedures http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/2019-nCoV_AGMP_PICNet.pdf

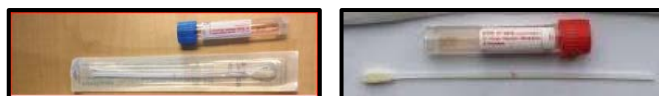
4) What samples to collect?

In the outpatient setting please collect either a Nasopharyngeal swab (NP) or a Throat Swab (NP is the preferred sample collection)

For patients with severe respiratory illness or hospitalized patients please collect an NP and a Throat Swab or sputum, endotracheal aspirate, Bronchoalveolar lavage.

USE the same collection devices that are routinely used for NP swabs for Influenza or other respiratory virus testing or skin/mucosal swabs for HSV/VZV viral testing.

UNSUITABLE collection device systems will be REJECTED and will delay testing. Unsuitable devices include: COPAN E-swabs for Pertussis testing, bacterial throat swabs for Group A Streptococcus testing, dry swabs, etc.



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5) How to collect the samples and what collection devices to use

Please refer to the BCCDC Public Health Laboratory eLab Handbook under COVID-19 test for specimen requirements. <http://www.elabhandbook.info/phsa/>

Please use the Virology Requisition form and write COVID-19 testing is being requested, OR add a special label to the requisition indicating the need for COVID-19 testing.

<http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Forms/Labs/VI%20Req.pdf>

Submit samples as per routine through your local diagnostic Microbiology Laboratories.

6) Contact numbers and responsible agencies

Person	Contact Information
Regional MHO List	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/bc-medical-health-officers.pdf
Regional microbiologists	
BCCDC Med Micro On Call	Phone: 604-661-7033 (24/7)
	Email: BCCDC_MicroOnCall@bccdc.ca
Approved by	Mel Krajden MD, FRCPC

For up to date information on COVID-19 please refer to:

[http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/novel-coronavirus-\(covid-19\)](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/novel-coronavirus-(covid-19))