

GUIDELINES ON LABORATORY TESTING FOR COVID-19

Clinical Specimens To Be Collected From Symptomatic Patients

Category	Test	Type of sample	Timing	Storage and transportation
Symptomatic patient	RT-PCR	Lower respiratory tract specimen - Sputum (if produced) - Tracheal aspirate - Bronchoalveolar lavage Upper respiratory tract specimen - Nasopharyngeal AND oropharyngeal swabs - Nasopharyngeal wash / aspirate	Collect on presentation.	If transportation of samples is within 72 hours, store at 2- 8°C. If transportation of samples is more than 72 hours, store at - 80°C and transport in ice.
	Serology	Serum	Collect at Day 5-8 (First Serum) AND upon discharge from hospital (Second Serum)	As above

A single negative test result, particularly if the sample was collected from an upper respiratory tract does not exclude the infection. Repeat sampling and testing.

Lower respiratory tract specimen is strongly recommended in severe or progressive disease.

A positive result for any other pathogens does not necessarily rule out COVID-19.

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Clinical Specimens To Be Collected From Asymptomatic Contacts

Category	Test	Type of sample	Timing	Storage and transportation
Asymptomatic contacts	RT-PCR	Nasopharyngeal AND oropharyngeal swabs	Within 14 days of last documented contact – to collect on first encounter.	<p>If transportation of samples is within 72 hours, store at 2- 8°C.</p> <p>If transportation of samples is more than 72 hours, store at - 80°C and transport in ice.</p>
	RTK Serology IgM test (POCT)	Whole Blood Serum	Day 13 of Home surveillance	Not Applicable (Point of care testing)