

Coronavirus SARS Co-V2 PCR Testing April 30, 2020 Update

Testing for the presence of Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 is ongoing at the RML core lab utilizing two PCR platforms that have received FDA Emergency Use Authorization to detect SARS-CoV2 virus particles within respiratory specimens of symptomatic patients. All specimens are being tested as quickly as possible, and the majority of specimens are resulted within 24-36 hours. For questions regarding pending tests, please send an email to RML Client Services. We have a team monitoring this email for rapid escalation of issues. Alternatively, you may call client services if there is a pressing issue (918-744-2500 or x18842 or x18843). Please **do not call the technical sections of the laboratory with testing requests or questions, our staff is not available to answer phone calls at this time.** Due to the need to quickly test the most critical patient populations, specimens are prioritized based upon clinical necessity as indicated by the patient's clinician and established guidelines. All testing requires a physician order and should only be performed on patients suspected of having COVID19 infection or concern for exposure. Testing has not been validated or approved by the FDA for screening of asymptomatic individuals.

Collection instructions:

1. Acceptable swabs have synthetic or rayon tips (NO calcium alginate) and plastic shafts (NO wooden shafts).
2. **Nasopharyngeal (NP) swab** in VTM, UTM, or M6, ESwab, or sterile saline (RML prepared kits) is the preferred specimen due to superior sensitivity. Oropharyngeal (OP), NP washes/aspirates and bronchial washings or bronchoalveolar lavage (BAL) specimens in a minimal volume of sterile saline (2 mL or less preferred) will be accepted, but results must be interpreted with caution due to reduced sensitivity. Nasal swabs have the least sensitivity but may be submitted, but both nares should be generously sampled with a single swab to increase likelihood of adequate virus collection.
3. Place swab in a transport tube containing 1-3 mL media; break off or cut swab shaft to fit inside tube.
4. Tightly seal the cap of the tube, label with two patient identifiers and place within a biohazard bag. Specimens should be refrigerated until picked up.
5. COVID-19 testing order is: SARS-CoV-2 by PCR, SARS-CoV2 (6907557).
6. RML will pick up all specimens from RML pick up sites and deliver them to the core lab.

If testing for respiratory viruses other than SARS-CoV2 is required, evaluation for both may be performed from a single swab if there is sufficient media. The incidence of other respiratory viruses has decreased significantly in recent weeks. Rare cases of RSV and metapneumovirus have been identified during the month of April in our lab, and there have been no cases of Influenza A or B, Parainfluenza virus or Adenovirus by PCR testing. However, If both tests are desired, order both the SARS-CoV-2 by PCR (6907557) and Mini VRESP PCR (6907567). RML will perform the SARS-CoV-2 test first, followed by the mini VRESP panel if specimen volume is sufficient. If only the SARS-CoV2 test is truly needed, please do not order the mini VRESP panel. All orders for the viral respiratory panel (VRESP PCR) will be converted to an abbreviated virus panel, the Mini VRESP PCR (6907567) with testing limited to influenza A and B, RSV and metapneumovirus. This is required to optimally utilize testing resources and personnel during this pandemic. If testing of other viruses such as Adenovirus or Parainfluenza viruses 1-3 is required, please order these tests separately (order names ADENOV PCR or PARA FLU P).

Due to CDC guidelines, **no viral cultures of respiratory specimens will be performed.** Order the mini VRESP panel by PCR if testing for respiratory viruses is necessary.