



# COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO HEALTH AGENCY PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY

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## SPECIMEN COLLECTION & TRANSPORT INSTRUCTIONS

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### Herpes and Varicella Swab Collection Kit – For NAAT Testing

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#### SPECIMEN STORAGE & TRANSPORT

Recommended Temperature: Refrigerated (2°C–8°C/35.6°F–46.4°F) or Frozen (–20°C/–4°F)

Maximum Holding Time: 7 days

Exceptions: If refrigeration is not possible, store at room temperature (up to 30°C/86°F) for up to 48 hours

#### KIT STORAGE

Temperature: room temperature (15°C–30°C/59°F–86°F) or according to manufacturer's instructions

Expiration: kit must be used prior to expiration date listed on kit label

#### ACCEPTABLE SPECIMEN TYPES

Swab of cutaneous or mucocutaneous (e.g., genital lesion, oral lesion): sterile polyester swab placed in viral transport medium or universal transport medium.

#### TEST ORDER OPTIONS FOR THIS KIT

6840: Herpes Simplex Virus (HSV) nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT)

6900: Varicella-Zoster Virus NAAT

#### REJECTION CRITERIA

- Holding time greater than 7 days
- Specimen container not labeled
- Specimen container has leaked or is not sealed properly
- Swab specimens that are missing the swab, contain multiple swabs, or contain the wrong swab

#### SPECIMEN COLLECTION

Optimal specimen collection time is within the first 3 days after appearance of the vesicular lesion. Prior to specimen collection, patients should avoid topical treatments as these may reduce virus yield.

1. Swab affected area:
  - a. Vesicular Lesion: Use a sterile needle to unroof the top of the vesicle. Use a sterile polyester swab to vigorously swab the base of the lesion, applying enough pressure to collect epithelial cells without causing bleeding while also collecting vesicular fluid. It is important to collect epithelial cells from the base of the lesion because they usually contain a significant amount of virus.
  - b. Non-Vesicular Lesion: Pre-moisten swab with saline. Collect cells from base of the lesion.
2. Place swab into **viral transport medium (VTM) or universal transport medium (UTM)**.
3. Place the collection tube inside the zippered portion of the biohazard specimen bag and seal tightly.
4. Fill out the requisition form completely. Fold it in half once (no staples please) and place in the outer pocket of the biohazard specimen bag (not inside the zippered pouch with the specimen).
5. Transport to the laboratory after collection. Specimen is stable at refrigerated temperatures for 7 days.