



SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY Public Health Laboratory

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SPECIMEN COLLECTION & TRANSPORT INSTRUCTIONS

Nasopharyngeal Swab for PCR

COLLECTION

1. Put on mask and gloves
2. Have patient sit with head against a wall as patients have a tendency to pull away during this procedure.
3. Insert swab into one nostril, going straight back (not upwards) and continue along the floor of the nasal passage for several centimeters until reaching the nasopharynx, (you will feel resistance). Repeat in other nostril with a second swab. See Figure 1.
4. Rotate the swab gently for 5 - 10 seconds to loosen the epithelial cells.
5. Remove swab and immediately insert into a viral transport media by inserting the swab at least ½ inch below the surface of the media. Bend or clip the wire swab handle to fit the transport medium tube and reattach the cap securely.

TRANSPORT

The specimen should be held and transported at (4°C) refrigerator temperature and delivered to the laboratory within 72 hours.

Figure 1

