



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO HEALTH AGENCY PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY

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SPECIMEN COLLECTION & TRANSPORT INSTRUCTIONS

Viral Transport Media Collection Kit – For Respiratory Molecular Testing

SPECIMEN STORAGE & TRANSPORT

Temperature: Refrigerated (2–8 °C / 35.6–46.4 °F)

Maximum Holding Time: 72 hours (time from collection to test set-up in laboratory)

Exceptions: For any exceptions to collection, storage, or transport conditions, please call lab first to discuss.

KIT STORAGE

Temperature: Room temperature (2–25 °C / 35.6–77 °F)

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

ACCEPTABLE SPECIMEN TYPES: ALL IN VTM

Acceptable Specimen Types in VTM	Influenza	SARS-CoV-2	Respiratory Panel	Pertussis
Nasopharyngeal swab (preferred)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nasal or mid-turbinate swab	✓	✓		
Bronchial or nasal wash	✓	✓		
Throat swab	✓	✓		
Bronchoalveolar lavage	✓	✓		
Tracheal aspirates	✓	✓		
Sputum	✓	✓		

collection swabs & viral transport medium (VTM)



REJECTION CRITERIA

- Holding time greater than 72 hours
- 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 & TRANSPORT INSTRUCTIONS

Viral Transport Media Collection Kit - For Influenza/RP/Pertussis PCR Testing

SPECIMEN COLLECTION - NASOPHARYNGEAL SWAB

1. Collect respiratory specimen during acute phase of illness.
 - a. Ask the patient to blow their nose to clear their nasal passage and tilt the patient's head backwards.
 - b. Swiftly insert the small swab into one nostril straight back (not upwards) at a depth equal to distance from nostrils to outer opening of the ear (see image on backside of page).
 - c. Firmly rotate the swab up to 5 times and hold in place for 5-10 seconds to collect epithelial cells.
 - d. Repeat with the other nostril using the same swab.
2. Snap the swab at the scored breakpoint line; place swab into VTM tube; **close the tube tightly**.
3. **Label the tube** with the patient's name, date of birth, and the date/time of collection.
4. Place the collection **tube inside the zippered portion** of the biohazard specimen bag and seal tightly.
5. Fill out the requisition form completely. Fold it in half once (no staples please) and place the **paperwork in the outer pocket** of the biohazard specimen bag (not inside the zippered pouch with the specimen).
6. Transport to the laboratory within 72 hours of collection (refrigerated).

