

Table 3. General Instructions for Swab-based SARS-CoV-2 Testing

	Nasopharyngeal*	Oropharyngeal	Mid-Turbinate	Nasal/Anterior Nares
Who Collects	Healthcare professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthcare professional Medical-supervised on-site self-collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthcare professional Medical-supervised on-site self-collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthcare professional Medical-supervised on-site self-collection
Tools/Equipment^	Flocked, synthetic fiber mini-tip swabs with plastic or wire shafts	Synthetic fiber swabs with plastic shafts only	Flocked tapered swab	Flocked, synthetic fiber or foam swab with plastic shaft
How to Collect	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tilt patient's head back 70° 2. Insert flexible shaft mini-tip swab through nares parallel to palate (not upwards) until: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Resistance is met, OR b. Distance is equivalent to the distance from the patient's ear to their nostril 3. Gently rub and roll swab 4. Leave swab in place for several seconds to absorb secretions 5. Slowly remove swab while rotating it 6. Immediately place swab in sterile tubes containing transport media <p>If collected with OP, combine in single tube → limit use of testing resources</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Insert swab in posterior pharynx and tonsillar areas 2. Rub swab over posterior pharynx and bilateral tonsillar pillars; avoid tongue, teeth, and gums 3. Immediately place swab in sterile tubes containing transport media <p>If collected with NP, combine in single tube → limit use of testing resources</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tilt patient's head back 70° 2. While gently rotating swab, insert swab about 2.5 cm (≥1 in.)# straight back (not up) into nostril until the collar/safety stopping point touches the outside of the nose 3. Rotate swab several times against wall 4. Leave swab in place for several seconds to absorb secretions 5. Repeat for both nostrils using same swab# 6. Immediately place in sterile tube containing transport media 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Insert swab about 1 cm (0.5 in) inside nares# 2. Rotate swab and leave in place for 10-15 seconds 3. Using same swab, repeat for other nostril 4. Immediately place in sterile tube containing transport media

NP: nasopharyngeal; **OP:** oropharyngeal; **MT:** nasal mid-turbinate; **NS:** anterior nares swab.

^Cautions: Do NOT use calcium alginate swabs or swabs with wooden shafts, which may contain substances that interfere with nucleic acid amplification. Rayon swabs may not be compatible with all molecular platforms. Clinical laboratories should confirm compatibility of collection devices during assay validation.

#Pediatrics: Swab insertion distance will differ for pediatric patients. Swabs with stoppers make estimating distance easier for MT self-collection. Two-sided MT sampling not always performed.

References

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Interim Guidelines for Collecting, Handling, and Testing Clinical Specimens for COVID-19. COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease) 2020. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/lab/guidelines-clinical-specimens.html>. Accessed 22 April 2020.
2. U.S. Food and Drug Administration. FAQs on Testing for SARS-CoV-2. 2020. Available at: <https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/emergency-situations-medical-devices/faqs-diagnostic-testing-sars-cov-2>. Accessed 29 April 2020.