How to Collect COVID-19 Samples

UPDATED 3/18/2020

- Tests for COVID-19 require one nasopharyngeal swab. Do not use swabs with wooden shafts, calcium alginate, or cotton tips.
- **NEW as of 3/18:** If an influenza test is to be performed, there is no longer a need for a second collection. Both tests can be performed from the same vial. It is important that if both tests are ordered that both labels be sent with the sample, otherwise testing will be missed.
- It does not matter whether you use a Flu collection kit or a COVID 19 collection kit, but just use **ONE** kit. Either test can be performed on either kit.
- NP swab should be placed into viral transport media and transported in its own biohazard bag. Any paperwork should be put in the outer pocket of the biohazard bag.
- **DO NOT SEND THRU PNEUMATIC TUBE.**
- Currently there are no facilities testing respiratory virus panels. We hope to be able to offer this testing onsite in the near future.

Below is specific guidance around how to take NP swabs.

**PPE:** Mask, eye protection, gown, and gloves (patient should be wearing a mask)

**NP Swab Collection:**

- Have patient lower mask to reveal nose, keeping mouth covered by mask.
- Open swab. Do not touch the tip.
- Tilt patient’s head back 70 degrees.
- Gently insert NP swab into nostril until posterior nasopharynx is reached.
- Rotate swab several times, keeping swab in contact with nasopharyngeal wall.
- Have patient replace mask.
- Place NP swab into viral transport media and snap off swab handle at line to fit into vial. Screw on cap securely.