

# Interim Guidelines for Collecting, Handling, and Testing Clinical Specimens for Patients Under Investigation (PUI) Submission\*

Specimen type	Directions for collection and storage
<b>Lower respiratory tract</b>	
Sputum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instruct the patient to rinse the mouth with water and expectorate deep cough sputum directly into a sterile, leak-proof, screw-cap sputum collection cup or sterile dry container.</li> <li>Refrigerate specimen at 2-8°C.</li> </ul>
<b>Upper respiratory tract</b>	
Nasopharyngeal swab <b>AND</b> oropharyngeal swab (NP/OP swab)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use only synthetic fiber swabs with plastic shafts. Do not use calcium alginate swabs or swabs with wooden shafts, as they may contain substances that inactivate some viruses and inhibit PCR testing.</li> <li>Place swabs immediately into sterile tubes containing 2-3 ml of viral transport media.</li> <li>Keep NP and OP specimens in separate vials.</li> <li>Refrigerate specimen at 2-8°C.</li> </ul>

**\*Serum submissions are not needed for a PUI submission, only NP and OP swabs, and sputum (if a productive cough is present). Sputum induction is not indicated. Serum is only recommended for collection with confirmed cases, per discussion with CDC.**

CDC's guidance on specimen collection and handling can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/guidelines-clinical-specimens.html>.

## Laboratory Testing

**Consult with your local health department or the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) at 1-888-EPI-UTAH (374-8824) prior to specimen collection or testing patients with suspected 2019-nCoV. If approved, complete the [test request form](#) and indicate the test as "2019-nCoV" in the box, 'Additional Information.'** Collect specimens as soon as possible once a PUI is identified, regardless of the time of symptom onset. Clinical laboratories performing routine hematology, urinalysis, and clinical chemistry studies, and microbiology laboratories performing diagnostic tests on serum, blood, or urine specimens should follow standard laboratory practices, including Standard Precautions, when handling potential 2019-nCoV specimens.

## Handling and Shipping Specimens

**Coordinate shipment of specimens through the UDOH.** Ship specimens on wet ice to the Utah Public Health Laboratory (UPHL) by normal courier. If this process will delay shipment, coordinate with UDOH. Package, ship and transport PUI specimens according to the current edition of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Dangerous Goods Regulations (<https://www.iata.org/en/programs/cargo/dgr>). Decontaminate work surfaces and equipment with appropriate disinfectants.

Specific guidance for laboratory workers and shipment of PUI specimens can be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/lab-biosafety-guidelines.html>, and <https://uphl.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/UPHL-Interim-Guidance-2019-nCoV-1-23-20.pdf>.