



COVID-19 Specimen Collection and Submission Instructions



<p>Pre-Approval Requirement</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">***PREAPPROVAL REQUIRED***</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This document applies only for submissions to the San Antonio Metro Health LRN Laboratory. For information regarding submission to other Public Health Laboratories in Texas, contact DSHS Austin Laboratory or your local health department. • Contact your Regional and/or Local Health Department (https://www.dshs.texas.gov/regions/2019-nCoV-Local-Health-Entities/) to obtain Epidemiologist (Epi) approval and PUI ID to test. Specimens MUST meet criteria for testing prior to shipping and WILL NOT be tested without prior approval. • All REQUIRED items on the G-2V submission form(s) must be completed prior to testing. See additional details under "Specimen Shipping" section.
<p>Testing Criteria</p>	<p>For Bexar County area hospitals and health providers, contact San Antonio Metropolitan Health District at (210) 207-8876.</p> <p>For hospitals and health providers in other counties, contact TX Department of State Health Services Region 8 at (210) 949-2000; after hours (210) 949-2121</p>
<p>Specimen Type</p>	<p>Nasopharyngeal (NP) swab Oropharyngeal (OP) swabs, Nasal swabs, and Nasal mid-turbinate (NTM) swabs are also acceptable. Do not send multiple specimens.</p> <p>DO NOT send additional specimen types (serum, urine, etc.) to Metro Health LRN Laboratory.</p>
<p>Specimen Collection and Handling</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specimens should be collected as soon as possible after onset of illness, preferably within the first 3-4 days. Although some viruses may be detected after longer time periods, the likelihood of recovering most respiratory viruses diminishes after 3-4 days. • Maintain proper infection control when collecting specimens. Guidance can be found at https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/isolation/index.html#a4 • All specimens must be labeled with at least two patient specific identifiers (e.g. PUI's name [First and Last] and date of birth). The identifiers must appear on both the primary specimen container and the associated G-2V submission form. Please see the specimen identification guidelines at https://www.dshs.texas.gov/lab/mrs_specimens.shtm#Label for additional details and acceptable patient identifiers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure the patient's name and other approved identifiers on the form exactly match what is written on the specimen tube.

Specimen Collection and Handling (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect an approved swab type using the appropriate collection technique. • 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. • Collection Technique <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nasopharyngeal swab: Insert a swab into the nostril parallel to the palate. Leave the swab in place for a few seconds to absorb secretions. Swab both nasopharyngeal areas with the same swab. Place swab immediately into a sterile tube containing 2-3 ml of viral transport media. ○ Additional collection methods for other specimen types (OP swab, Nasal swab, NTM swab, etc) may be found at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/lab/guidelines-clinical-specimens.html • If VTM is unavailable, Universal Transport Media (UTM), liquid Amies transport medium, or 0.85% Saline may be substituted. <p>Refrigerate all specimens at 2-8°C promptly after collection and ship overnight or transport to laboratory on cold packs. DO NOT put wet ice with the specimen.</p>
Specimen Shipping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport specimens to the laboratory as soon as possible. Specimens can be stored at 2-8°C for up to 72 hours after collection. If a delay in shipping or transporting is expected, store specimens at -70°C or below and ship on dry ice. • If shipping specimens through a commercial courier (Fedex), specimens may be shipped Monday-Thursday for receipt at the Metro Health Laboratory Tuesday-Friday. Do not ship for Saturday delivery. Request "Priority overnight" not "First Overnight". • For local couriers, specimens can be dropped off any time during laboratory delivery hours. • Complete a <i>DSHS G-2V Virology Specimen Submission Form</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A separate G-2V is required for each specimen submitted. ○ A submitter ID is required to submit specimens. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To request a submitter ID, please complete the <i>Submitter Identification (ID) Number Request Form</i> available at www.dshs.texas.gov/lab/MRS_forms.shtm#Microbiological and follow the instructions for submitting the form. ▪ Please include an email address in section 3 of the <i>Submitter ID Request Form</i> for a faster response. ○ Patient Information: Please include the assigned PUI ID number on the G-2V form (e.g. 29-001 for San Antonio Metro Health District or 08-001 for Region 8) ○ Section 3: Specimen Source, select or write the appropriate specimen type (e.g. Nasopharyngeal swab, OP swab, Nasal swab or NTM swab). ○ Section 4: Virology, select "Other" and write in "COVID-19". ○ Section 6 of the G-2V For Payor Source: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Please mark "IDEAS" as the Payor Source
Specimen Shipping Continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not place the G-2V form with the primary container; if a specimen leaks during transport, the G-2V form will be contaminated. • Follow International Air Transportation Regulations for shipping of Category "B" Biological Substances. Infectious Subs. brochure - PHMSA • Specimens submitted without the G-2V form and/or incomplete information may be delayed in testing or rejected. • Ship/Deliver to: San Antonio Metro Health LRN Laboratory 2509 Kennedy Circle, Building 125 San Antonio, TX 78235 Delivery times: Monday-Sunday 8-5pm • For other laboratory-related questions, please call Metro Health Laboratory at (210) 207-0842.