

GUIDANCE FOR CLINICAL LABORATORIES HANDLING SPECIMENS FOR COVID-19 TESTING

Testing for COVID-19 must be approved in advance by the NYC DOHMH. Do not send specimens to the NYC PHL unless the requesting provider has received DOHMH approval by the **Coronavirus Testing Call Center**. Provider testing guidance can be found on the DOHMH website:
<https://www.nyc1.gov/site/doh/providers/health-topics/novel-respiratory-viruses.page>



If DOHMH approves testing, providers should collect:

- 1 nasopharyngeal (NP) swab and 1 oropharyngeal swab **in the same viral transport medium collection tube**
- 1 lower respiratory tract specimen if the patient is inpatient and able to produce (sputum, tracheal aspirate, or bronchoalveolar lavage)

and submit to the clinical laboratory at your facility.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Do not attempt viral culture of specimens from patients suspected of being infected with COVID-19.

CDC has released interim laboratory biosafety guidelines for handling and processing specimens associated with COVID-19. For detailed information, please visit:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/lab/lab-biosafety-guidelines.html>

For specimen collection and handling guidance, Laboratory Test Request Forms for COVID-19 testing and BioFire Respiratory Panel testing, and the link to order NYC PHL tests electronically through eOrder, please visit:
<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/providers/reporting-and-services/public-health-lab.page#forms>

For CDC and WHO guidance for healthcare professionals and laboratories, please visit:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/>
<https://emergency.cdc.gov/han/2020.asp>
<https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>

eOrder

- eOrder is the NYC Public Health Laboratory’s web-based test ordering and result reporting system.
- Facilities should order COVID-19 tests through eOrder. When doing so, please note that only an eOrder form should be submitted. Do not send a paper requisition and eOrder form together with the same specimen.
- If your laboratory does not already have an eOrder account, please visit the [PHL website for more information](#).