

# 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 (866-692-3641)**. 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, the preferred specimen combination for testing is:

- 1 nasopharyngeal (NP) swab
- 1 nasal swab (anterior nares) **may be self collected by patient with healthcare personnel supervision**
- 1 saliva specimen **self collected by patient with healthcare personnel supervision**

Additional acceptable specimen types include:

- 1 NP swab and 1 oropharyngeal (OP) swab **in the same viral transport medium collection tube (NP/OP swab)**
- 1 lower respiratory tract specimen if patient is able to produce and/or hospitalized (sputum or tracheal aspirate)

and submit to the clinical laboratory at your facility. Guidance for specimen [self-collection can be found here](#).

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

**Do not attempt viral culture of any respiratory specimens.**

Please visit [nyc.gov/health](https://nyc.gov/health) for the latest updates, including critical information distributed through the

[Health Alert Network \(HAN\)](#)

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 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 web-based test ordering and result reporting system.
- Facilities must 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 an 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](#).