



## Instructions for Submitting Specimens for Monkeypox Testing to the New York City Public Health Laboratory

Approval from the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC Health Department) is required before specimens are tested at the NYC Public Health Laboratory (PHL).

### Requesting Approval for Monkeypox Testing at PHL

Call the NYC Health Department Provider Access Line at 866-692-3641 to request testing for suspected monkeypox. If testing at PHL is approved, read the following specimen collection and submission instructions.

### Specimen Collection

1. Follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Infection Prevention and Control recommendations, available at [cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/clinicians/infection-control-healthcare.html](https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/clinicians/infection-control-healthcare.html), while collecting specimens.
2. Assemble testing materials: Either of the following materials may be used for collection:
  - **Four web swabs:** Sterile nylon, polyester or Dacron swabs in viral transport media (VTM). Place each swab in a separate (individual) container with VTM. **Swab in VTM is the preferred specimen type.**
  - OR**
  - **Four dry swabs:** Sterile nylon, polyester or Dacron swabs with a plastic shaft. Place each swab in a separate (individual) sterile container.

**Note:** Cotton swabs and swabs with metal or wooden shafts should not be used for collection. Specimens collected with these swabs will be rejected by PHL.
3. Collect specimens.
  - A. Identify two lesions per patient to sample, preferably from different locations on their body or with different appearances.
  - B. Collect two swabs from each lesion. **A total of four swabs should be collected.**
  - C. Using two sterile swabs, scrub the base of the first lesion vigorously enough to ensure that cells from the lesion are collected.
  - D. Place the two swabs in their own separate sterile container (such as an empty conical tube or urine cup for dry swabs, or a VTM tube if used). Break off the end of the applicator if needed.
  - E. Repeat steps C and D for the second specimen.
  - F. Label each container with all the following information:
    - The patient's first and last name
    - At least one identifier (such as the patient's date of birth, medical record number or referring lab accession number)
    - The date and time the specimen was collected

- The lesion site (such as the face, neck or left hand)
- **Note:** Specimens from different lesion sites require separate eOrder test requisitions, so two eOrder test requisitions will need to be submitted per patient. To submit an eOrder test requisition, read **Testing Order (eOrder) Instructions**. The information on the specimen label and eOrder test requisition must match to prevent testing delays or rejection of specimens.

### **Specimen Storage**

Within one hour of collection, place specimens in a refrigerator (between 2 and 8 degrees Celsius [C]) or freezer (negative 20 degrees C). Refrigerated or frozen specimens should be sent to PHL within five days of collection. Refrigerated specimens must be sent with cold packs, while frozen specimens must be sent on dry ice.

### **Test Ordering (eOrder) Instructions**

1. Go to **[a816-phleorder.nyc.gov/PHLeOrder](https://a816-phleorder.nyc.gov/PHLeOrder)**.
2. Sign in or register as a new user. For instructions on creating an account, visit **[on.nyc.gov/phi-eorder-guide](https://on.nyc.gov/phi-eorder-guide)**.
3. Fill out required information and add the following to the specified fields:
  - Test: **Clinical Poxvirus**
  - Specimen Container: **Swab** or **Swab in VTM** (choose one based on the container type being submitted)
  - Specimen Source: **Other**
  - Specimen Source Other: **Skin** or **Lesion + Site of Lesion Swabbed** (for example, left arm)
4. Fill in both collection date and collection time fields as shown on the specimen containers.
  - **Note:** Results will be provided to the submitter via eOrder. The submitter must then make the results available to the ordering provider, who should relay those results to the patient.
5. Inform your clinical laboratory that specimens should be delivered to PHL and an eOrder has been submitted.

### **Specimen Packaging and Transport**

1. Send specimens to PHL using Category B packaging and shipping guidelines, available at **[bit.ly/usdot-transporting-substances](https://bit.ly/usdot-transporting-substances)**.
2. Triple-pack specimens.
  - Place each individual specimen container in a leakproof primary receptacle (such as a sealed biohazard bag).
  - Place each individual container in a leakproof secondary receptacle.
  - Place all items together in a rigid or strong outer packaging.
  - Place a list of contents and paperwork (the eOrder test requisition) between the secondary receptacle and outer packaging.

- Specimens should be transported on ice packs if refrigerated or dry ice if frozen.
- Transport specimens to PHL at:  
 NYC Public Health Laboratory  
 Biothreat Response Laboratory  
 455 First Ave.  
 New York, NY 10016

**Note:** After August 19, 2022, the NYC Health Department will not provide courier services or specimen pickups.

### **Obtaining Test Results**

eOrder users should:

1. Navigate to the “Results” section of the dashboard.
2. Click **Final Result**.
3. Use the search fields at the bottom of the screen to filter for specific orders.

Non-eOrder users should either:

- Follow up with the people assigned to submit orders to PHL at the facility where the specimens were collected or from which the specimens were shipped. The submitter can print the report from the eOrder system.
- Contact **phleordersupport@health.nyc.gov** or 212-336-4644 (Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.) to request a report.

For additional instructions on accessing reports, visit **[on.nyc.gov/phl-eorder-guide](https://on.nyc.gov/phl-eorder-guide)**.

### **Additional Information and Resources**

- For laboratory personnel: **[cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/lab-personnel/index.html](https://cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/lab-personnel/index.html)**
- For laboratory procedures: **[cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/lab-personnel/lab-procedures.html](https://cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/lab-personnel/lab-procedures.html)**

### **PHL Contact Information**

If you have questions about eOrder or test results, call 212-336-4644.

**The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves. 8.18.22**