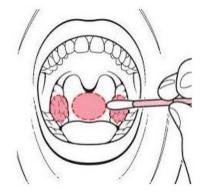


## **Leaders in Laboratory Medicine**

## Throat collection instructions for respiratory viruses using saline transport medium

- 1. Various collection containers and colored media may be provided to your site. Throat swabs will have a shaft with a continuous thickness. Nasopharyngeal (NP) swabs have a narrower flexible end and the swab head is smaller than the throat swab. The saline collection kits include a polyester or cotton-tipped swab with sterile saline media. These swabs may not have a breakpoint.
- 2. Store collection kit at room temperature.
- **3.** Fill out the requisition provided for COVID-19 and respiratory virus testing or enter into your EMR and label the tube with:
  - Name and date of birth
  - Unique identifiers (MRN or Alberta Health Care Number)
  - Time of collection
  - Site of collection (throat)
  - Include ordering provider (designated medical officer of health or other physician) on the requisition
  - If using a printed label make sure the label is properly affixed to the tube
- **4.** Use personal protective equipment (PPE) as per protocol for collection of COVID-19 NP samples.
- **5.** Explain procedure to the patient.
- Collect throat swab. VIGOROUSLY swab the areas highlighted in the figure. Swabbing may activate the gag reflex.
- 7. While holding the swab in your hand, unscrew the tube cap. Do not spill the tube contents. If using a swab without a breakpoint, carefully insert the swab into the tube and hold the swab just above the transport medium.



- Break the shaft by bending it over the edge of the tube opening multiple times.
- Alternatively, cut the shaft with scissors decontaminating the blades with alcohol wipes between collections.
- 8. Discard the top portion of the shaft. Tightly screw the cap onto the tube. Leaking specimens will be rejected by the laboratory.
- 9. Place tube in biohazard bag. Place requisition in pouch outside of the bag.
- **10.** Refrigerate tubes or store on ice if possible. If no refrigeration available, store at room temperature and ship to the lab within 48 hours.
- 11. An instructional video is available here.