



HOW TO TAKE A SARS-COV-2 / UPPER RESPIRATORY TRACT SAMPLE

Patients being tested for SARS-CoV-2 should fulfil current Victorian COVID-19 testing criteria.

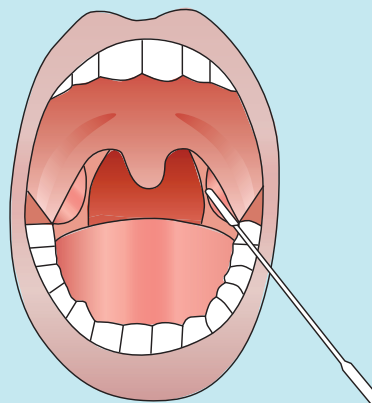
Visit <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/assessment-and-testing-criteria-for-covid-19> for the most up to date information.

Testing for respiratory illnesses will include Flu A/B, RSV, Human Metapneumovirus, Adenovirus, Rhinovirus and Parainfluenza virus.

STEP 1 – Safety precautions

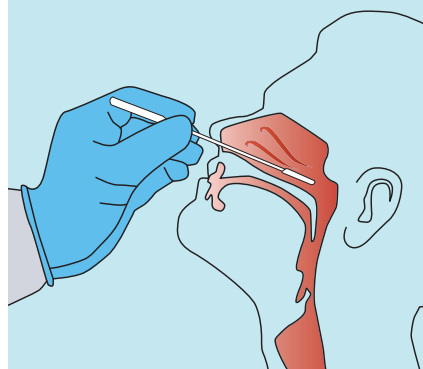
- Assess if the patient has severe symptoms suggestive of pneumonia. If this is the case, this patient should be managed in a hospital, including collection of diagnostic sample(s).
- Use appropriate precautions to avoid contact and droplet exposure, including hand hygiene and donning Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- Stand slightly to the side of the patient when taking the sample to avoid exposure to respiratory secretions, should the patient cough or sneeze.
- For more information, refer to <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/infection-prevention-control-resources-covid-19>

STEP 2 – Oropharyngeal (throat) sampling



- Swab the tonsillar beds and the back of the throat, avoiding the tongue and saliva.
- To conserve swabs the same swab that has been used to sample the oropharynx should be utilised for nasopharyngeal or nasal sampling.

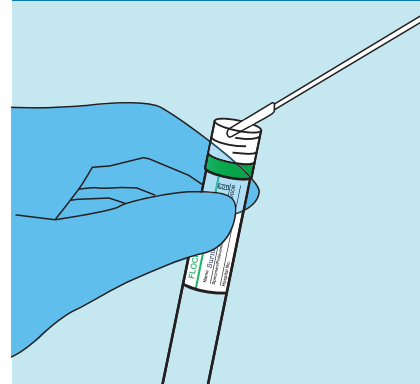
STEP 3 – Nasopharyngeal (nasopharynx) or nasal sampling



Nasopharyngeal
(for respiratory PCR +/- SARS-CoV-2)

- Gently insert the flocked swab into nose and slide along floor of nasal cavity approximately the length of the patient's index finger. Leave the swab in place for a few seconds to absorb secretions.
 - Withdraw and repeat the process in the other nostril using the same swab.
- Nasal*
(if only SARS-CoV-2 test is required)
- Gently insert the swab along the floor of the nasal cavity parallel to the palate until resistance is encountered, and rotate gently for 10-15 seconds.
 - Withdraw and repeat the process in the other nostril using the same swab.

STEP 4 – Place the swab in the vial



- Place the swab into the accompanying viral transport medium.
- Snap the swab at the indicated break-off point. Use the edge of the vial and cap to apply pressure if required.
- Replace the cap securely.
- Follow instructions over the page for labelling, bagging and storing the sample.

STEP 5 – Safely doff PPE

Remove your PPE in the following sequence:

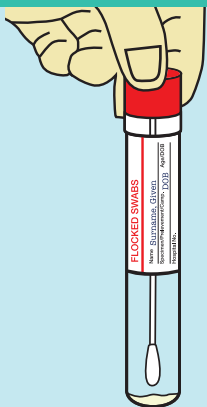
1. Remove gown and gloves
2. Wash hands
3. Remove protective eye wear
4. Remove mask/respirator
5. Wash hands

For more information, refer to <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/infection-prevention-control-resources-covid-19>



HOW TO PACKAGE AND STORE A SARS-COV-2 / UPPER RESPIRATORY TRACT SAMPLE

STEP 1 – Label samples and complete request form



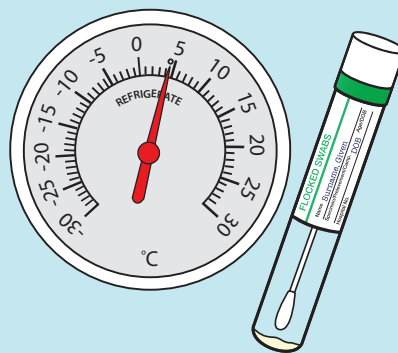
- Ensure swab is labelled with patient surname, given name and DOB.
- Tick the required test/s on the request form: COVID19 and/or Respiratory PCR.
- On the request form, specimens from Health Care Workers (HCW) should be marked: **URGENT HCW**.
- Specimens for return-to-work testing for HCWs and Aged Care Workers should be marked: **URGENT HCW CLEARANCE TESTING, please notify to the Victorian Department of Health.**
- Provide a contact number for the referring clinic/clinician and a **current contact number for the patient.**

STEP 2 – Triple contained samples



- 1 Place swab container inside the smaller biohazard bag with liner, then
- 2 Enclose within the larger specimen bag. Place request form in the pocket of the specimen bag.

STEP 3 – Store samples in fridge



Store samples in a refrigerator at 2-8 degrees Celsius.

STEP 4 – Provide samples to VCS Pathology courier



- Samples must arrive at **VCS Pathology for testing within 72 hours of collection, and preferably on the same day.**
- For courier pick-ups please call the Reception Team on (03) 9250 0300.
- Our couriers routinely sanitise their hands prior to entering and upon leaving each clinic.

STEP 5 – Re-ordering supplies

- Please contact VCS Pathology to order consumables.
- Clinics that are new to VCS Pathology can call our Reception Team on (03) 9250 0300.
- Registered clinics can order by phone or by using the Consumables Order Form at <https://www.vcs.org.au/pathology/for-practitioners/consumables-order-form/>

STEP 6 – Results

- Positive and inconclusive SARS-CoV-2 test results will be phoned through to the referring clinician within two working days.
- Inconclusive SARS-CoV-2 test samples will require a recollect test.
- Both the laboratory and referring clinician are required to notify positive results to the Victorian Department of Health by telephone.