

## COVID-19 Specimen Collection and Submission Guidelines

Healthcare providers with authorized patients (via [RedCap](#)) should work with their internal policies, incident command, infection preventionists, and laboratory personnel to collect specimens and submit/ship them for testing. ISDH Laboratories requires all COVID-19 test requisitions to be submitted through its Laboratory Information Management System (LimsNet). **Unauthorized specimens and specimens not submitted through LimsNet will not be tested.**

### LimsNet Test Order/Requisition:

#### New users

- To sign up for LimsNet, call the LIMS Help Desk 317-921-5506, or email us at [LimsAppSupport@isdh.in.gov](mailto:LimsAppSupport@isdh.in.gov).
- Please provide the following information:
  - Name of your facility.
  - Facility address.
  - Names and email addresses of all individuals who need LimsNet access at your facility.
  - The email body or subject line should read: "Requesting Virology Test Submission Access".

**Existing users:** see <http://limsnet.isdh.in.gov/>

**Specimen Collection:** *Recommended Specimen Type is a Nasopharyngeal (NP) Swab, Mid-Turbinate Swab, or Nasal Swab (both nares)*

Click here for further information about collection guidelines: [Specimens](#)

### Shipping:

Authorized specimens should be [shipped Category B](#), on cold packs, to the mailing address on the LimsNet Cover page (ISDHL or Eli Lilly).

- Please double check the LimsNet cover page for the proper shipping address.
- Ensure that your package shipping label matches the mailing address on the LIMSNET cover page.
- Shipment to the incorrect facility will cause testing delays and possible cancellation (>72 hours).
- Specimens will not be received after the normal dock receiving hours. Please keep specimens collected after normal dock receiving hours refrigerated and deliver during normal dock receiving hours:

Weekdays: 8:15 AM - 4:45 PM

Weekends:

Delivery Site	Courier Delivery		UPS Delivery		FedEx Delivery	
	Saturday	Sunday	Saturday	Sunday	Saturday	Sunday
ISDHL	8 am – 4 pm	8 am – 4 pm	8 am – 4 pm	No delivery	8 am - 4 pm*	No delivery
Eli Lilly	8 am – 5 pm	8 am – 5 pm	8 am – 5pm	8am – 5pm	8am – 5pm	8am – 5pm

\* Must specify Saturday delivery, First Overnight or Priority Overnight

- ISDHL or Eli Lilly testing results will only be reported back to the LimsNet submitter. It will be the responsibility of this entity to relay all laboratory results to the patient’s healthcare provider.

**Please call 317-921-5500 or email [isdh-lab-info@isdh.IN.gov](mailto:isdh-lab-info@isdh.IN.gov) for more information.**

## ISDHL COVID-19 FAQ

### Authorization

#### **Is authorization required for ISDHL or Eli Lilly testing?**

Testing will only be performed on approved patients.

#### **How do I get authorization?**

Please use the online [RedCap portal](#). To use, fill out the required information. RedCap will indicate if testing is approved or denied at the end of the survey.

### Specimen Collection

#### **Where can we get test kits?**

Indicate your supply status on the [EMResource web site](#). From the ISDH Website: “EMResource is used by healthcare, public health, first responders, and other healthcare and government agencies. This system is utilized to monitor and notify changes in resource status such as diversions, EOC activations, resource availability, and other information.” This is the mechanism that ISDH is using to help resupply essential items, such as swabs and VTM.

#### **What swab types are accepted for testing at ISDHL/Eli Lilly?**

Flocked NP swabs are acceptable for submitting NP specimens to ISDHL/Eli Lilly. Non-flocked swabs, such as synthetic swabs (with plastic shafts) or mid-turbinate swabs are also accepted.

#### **Is ISDHL/Eli Lilly able to accept swabs in 1.5 mL VTM?**

No, Eli Lilly requires 3 mL. Therefore, ISDHL is asking for 3 mL as well, since most specimens are being routed to Eli Lilly. This requirement is because of the specifications of the robotics Eli Lilly has been using to scale up our testing so significantly!

#### **Will ISDHL/Eli Lilly accept VTM or UTM in a sterile container that is not the original container?**

Yes, both will accept VTM or UTM that is not in the original container as long as it is fully labeled (contents, patient identifiers, expiration, etc.).

### LimsNet/Test Requisition

#### **Do we have to use LimsNet or can we use the Virology paper form?**

LimsNet is required and must be entered before the specimen can be tested.

The LimsNet cover sheet must accompany the specimen to ISDHL or Eli Lilly. The LimsNet cover sheet must be received before the specimen can be tested. Delays in receipt of this cover sheet will result in reporting delays.

#### **What should I do if I don't have access to LimsNet?**

Please contact the LimsNet Help Desk at 317-921-5506 or [limsappsupport@isdh.in.gov](mailto:limsappsupport@isdh.in.gov).

**Do you have a contact number for Eli Lilly? We forgot to include the LimsNet cover sheet with our specimens today, and I didn't want testing to be delayed.**

ISDHL is managing specimen accessioning issues for Eli Lilly. Please contact 317-921-5500 or [isdh-lab-info@isdh.in.gov](mailto:isdh-lab-info@isdh.in.gov) with these types of submission issues.

**My patient was authorized for testing at Hospital ABC but I am caring for the patient at Doctor's Office XYZ. How do I get their test results? Why can't I see them in LimsNet?**

LimsNet results are only visible to the organization that submitted them. You must contact the submitting laboratory for these results.

### Specimen Transport/Shipping

**LimsNet says my specimen is *in transit* to Eli Lilly but FedEx says it was delivered. Was it lost?**

There is a lag time in LimsNet between when a specimen is delivered and the status is updated. We are working diligently to decrease that lag time. Thank you for your patience!

**What is the stability of specimens for COVID-19 testing?**

Store specimens at 2-8°C for up to 72 hours after collection. If a delay in testing or shipping is expected, store specimens at -70°C or below. If stored at -70°C, specimens must be shipped to ISDHL or Eli Lilly on dry ice and arrive *frozen*. Specimens that have thawed in transport will not be tested.

**What happens if I cannot deliver my specimen(s) during normal receiving dock hours?**

Specimens will not be received after the normal receiving dock hours (at either ISDHL or Eli Lilly). These specimens should be refrigerated and deliver during normal receiving dock hours:

Weekdays: 8:15 AM - 4:45 PM

Weekends:

Delivery Site	Courier Delivery		UPS Delivery		FedEx Delivery	
	Saturday	Sunday	Saturday	Sunday	Saturday	Sunday
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**How do I drop off specimens at Lilly for them to test?**

The address for drop-off at Lilly is 639 Delaware St., Indianapolis, 46225, Gate 12, Dock 57. The 639 Delaware address will take you to the mail entrance of Eli Lilly, where you will see a big fountain. This is NOT where to drop off specimens. Proceed to the next available turn on the right (going north on Delaware St.). You'll see a guard checkpoint; just let them know you're there to drop off specimens and they will direct you where to go.

## Specimen Rejection

### **One of our specimens was rejected due to an incorrect date of birth. Is there any way to fix this?**

If the date of birth in LimsNet is incorrect, ISDHL allows the submitter to request a change through LimsNet; however, if the date of birth is incorrect on the tube, then a new specimen will need to be collected and resubmitted.

### **One of our specimens was rejected due to missing a second patient identifier. What does this mean?**

Both the LimsNet form, and the specimen, *must* be labeled with two patient identifiers. Generally, this is the patient's First and Last name and their date of birth. Specimens received without a second identifier on the tube will be cancelled and discarded. A new specimen will need to be collected.

### **One of our specimens was rejected due to 'leaked in transit'. What does this mean?**

This is usually due to the threads on the specimen tube being misaligned with the cap OR not breaking the swab off at the correct point, which puts pressure on the specimen cap and causes the tube to leak. How do we know it leaked? There is VTM in the specimen bag during transit. These are cancelled and discarded automatically. A new specimen will need to be collected.

## Testing

### **What is tested at ISDHL and what is tested at Eli Lilly?**

Eli Lilly is testing NP swabs. ISDHL is testing ISDH strike team patients, oropharyngeal or sputum specimens, and post-mortem specimens.

### **What type of testing is ISDHL performing?**

ISDHL is performing the CDC's EUA-approved COVID-19/SARS-CoV-2 test.

### **What type of testing is Eli Lilly performing?**

Eli Lilly's assay based on CDC published COVID-19/SARS-CoV-2 protocol.

## Reporting

### **What is the turn-around time for results?**

Results will be available within three (3) days of specimen receipt.

### **Will ISDHL report results to the patient's healthcare provider?**

The ISDHL (including specimens tested at Eli Lilly) will only be reported back to the LimsNet submitter. It is the responsibility of this entity to relay all laboratory results to the patient's healthcare provider.

## Commercial Testing

### **What private labs are providing testing for patients who don't qualify for ISDHL or Lilly testing?**

A list is available on this [page](#) under the question: [Q: What laboratories are offering testing under the policy outlined in Section IV.A of the Policy for Diagnostic Tests for Coronavirus Disease-2019?](#)

### **How do I report a positive COVID-19 specimen to ISDH?**

You should report a positive the same way you report all other reportable disease conditions to ISDH. This is primarily through electronic laboratory reporting (ELR) through the ISDH NBS system. If your facility currently reports labs through ELR to ISDH, contact Irene Jameson to set up COVID-19 reporting (317-233-7684 or [ijameson@isdh.in.gov](mailto:ijameson@isdh.in.gov)).

If your facility does not currently report through ELR, please have your infection preventionist (IP) report the positive through a morbidity report. Provide a pdf of the lab report to your IP as they will need to attach this file when submitting their report. ISDH is not onboarding new ELR/NBS customers currently.

Alternatively, you can fax positive reports to 317-233-7747.

## Other

**Two army men delivered a plain brown box containing swabs to my local health department. Who is this and why are they distributing kits?**

The Indiana National Guard is being deployed based on need demonstrated in the [EMResource web site](#). This is who delivered your swabs, distributed from the Strategic National Stockpile.

**I feel like I received an email for COVID-19 testing that was a scam. What should I do? I do not want any of our labs in Indiana to get caught up in their scam.**

Unfortunately, there are several COVID-19 lab testing scams circulating. This issue has been escalated to the Indiana Attorney General and that team is investigating. If you suspect a scam, please report your suspicion as an online [consumer complaint](#) to the Indiana Attorney General.

**Are COVID-19 IgG/IgM antibody tests (blood/serum) an appropriate test?**

We are not recommending COVID-19 IgG/IgM antibody testing (blood/serum) for patient management at this time. These tests may give misleading results because they don't become positive until the patient has been sick a long time. Also, these tests cannot differentiate between COVID-19 antibodies, and those produced from other, normally circulating coronaviruses, such as coronavirus HKU1, NL63, OC43, or 229E. Serology testing is NOT recommended at this time.

# Collection Swab Options for COVID-19 Testing

## Acceptable versus Unacceptable

### ACCEPTABLE



### NOT ACCEPTABLE



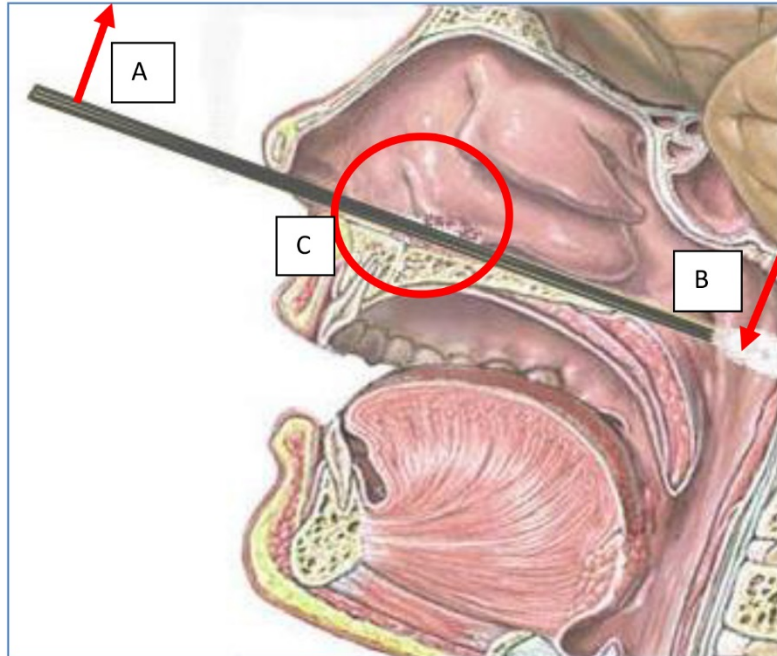
Wooden shaft/cotton tipped applicator



Calcium alginate swabs

VTM – Viral Transport Medium; NP – Nasopharyngeal

## Proper Nasopharyngeal (NP) Swab Collection Quick Reference Guide



- Use nylon flocked tipped, flexible plastic shaft swab
- Don goggles, gloves, mask or other PPE as necessary
- Push the handle end of the swab (A) toward the ceiling such that swab end (B) stays on the floor of the sinus cavity
- Watch that the swab tip doesn't stop at the lower sinus ridge (C).
  - **NOTE:** This happens frequently and folks believe they are at the nasopharynx.
    - As you know, the nasopharynx is located at the very back of the sinus cavity (near the front of the ear) as indicated by the swab tip placement in the photo above.
- Rotate swab gently ½ turn and back to collect epithelial cells and gently remove
- Place swabs directly into viral transport media (VTM)
- Label all specimens as **“Nasopharyngeal” or “NP”**
  - Do NOT label as *“Nasal”*, these are unacceptable for testing
- Store refrigerated until ready to transport to ISDH laboratories

SENDER (from): \_\_\_\_\_

CONSIGNEE (to): The Indiana State Department of Health Laboratories

NAME AND TELEPHONE NUMBER OF PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SHIPMENT:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

