 First Nations Health Authority Health through wellness	<b>CLINICAL PROCEDURE: Nasopharyngeal Swab Testing</b>			
	<b>AUTHORIZATION:</b>	<b>DATE APPROVED:</b>	<b>CURRENT VERSION DATE:</b> July 22, 2020	<b>Page</b> <b>1 of 10</b>

Version	Date	Comments / Changes
1.0	May 2020	Interim Clinical Procedure Released
2.0	Month Year	
3.0	Month Year	

A designated process describing the method or steps required to complete a clinical technique or psychomotor skill. This procedure supports all FNHA's organizational directives and operating principles, based on FNHA values of respect, culture, discipline, excellence, relationships and fairness. Clients have the right to receive and guide quality care delivered in the context of cultural safety and humility.

**PURPOSE:**

To provide the steps necessary to complete a nasopharyngeal swab for COVID-19 Testing. A nasopharyngeal (NP) swab is preferred for sample collection for COVID-19 testing by Nucleic Acid Tests. If a specimen cannot be collected by NP swab, a throat swab can be taken instead.

To see who is qualified to perform this procedure, see [Appendix A: Parameters for NP Swab testing for COVID-19](#)

For sites without onsite specimen collection, see [Appendix A: Parameters for NP Swab testing for COVID-19](#)


For the most current guidelines on who should be tested, see [Appendix A: Parameters for NP Swab testing for COVID-19](#)

**MATERIALS REQUIRED**

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for contact and droplet precautions**
  - gown
  - gloves
  - surgical/procedural mask (do not require the use of an N95 respirator)
  - eye protection (face shield or goggles)
  
- **General items**
  - Clean field such as a blue pad to place supplies on
  - Nasopharyngeal swab; see [Appendix B: Swabs for COVID-19 testing](#) for list of validated swabs
  - [Client Handout](#) under Resources below
  - Labels for specimen container and requisition; see [Appendix B: Swabs for COVID-19 testing](#)
  - Biohazard bag
  - Procedure mask for client
  - Access to hand hygiene supplies for nurse and client
  - Box of tissues

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## 1. PROCEDURE

### 1.1 Prepare the client

1. Explain the procedure. The nasopharyngeal swab is an uncomfortable procedure for the client. Ensure that the client is sitting on a chair and as comfortable as possible. Ensure client understanding in order to give informed consent for the sample collection.
2. Perform hand hygiene.
3. Healthcare worker dons PPE for contact and droplet precautions as per [donning guideline](#). Please see [COVID-19: Interim Guide to Using PPE](#) for conservation measures.
4. Mucus can interfere with specimen collection. Have the client blow their nose into a tissue to remove any extra secretions from the nasal passages before swab is taken. Provide client with an extra facial tissue to use as needed.
5. To check for patency of the nasal passage have the client gently press the outside of the nostril, take a breath and blow out through the open nasal passage.

### 1.2 Specimen collection with nasopharyngeal swab for Adults

1. Insert the flexible swab several centimeters (approximately the distance from the client's nose to their earlobe) with a slow, steady motion along the floor of the nose (straight back, not up the nose) until the nasopharynx has been reached. See [Appendix C: Obtaining a Nasopharyngeal Swab Specimen](#) for picture of procedure.
2. Once resistance is met (the swab should pass into the nasopharynx relatively easily), rotate the swab for 10 to 15 seconds and withdraw the swab.
3. Place swab in viral transport medium.
4. Break off top of swab. Screw cap on snugly.
5. Remove gloves and perform hand hygiene.
6. Don new gloves.
7. Label the specimen (see [Appendix B: Swabs for COVID-19 testing](#)), place the labelled specimen in the biohazard bag and insert completed requisition in the side pouch.
8. Healthcare worker doffs PPE and performs hand hygiene as per [doffing guideline](#). Please see [An Interim Guide to Using PPE](#) for conservation measures.
9. If sample needs to be stored, place in a fridge at 4 degrees.

### 1.3 Specimen collection with nasopharyngeal swab for infants and Children

1. For preparation, positioning and procedure for pediatric clients in the BCCDC [COVID-19: Pediatric testing guidelines for British Columbia](#)


### 1.4 Preparing specimen to send off for laboratory testing

1. Complete laboratory requisition with client demographics, the doctor or nurse practitioner MSP billing number, time and date of specimen collection, test being ordered (COVID-19 NAT) and priority code. See [Appendix D: Laboratory Requisition for COVID-19 testing](#) for sample laboratory requisition.

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2. Request that a copy of the results be sent to the health centre/nursing station as applicable. If using the billing number of a physician or a nurse practitioner who is not at the work site, indicate on the lab requisition that the health centre or nursing station should receive a copy of the result.
3. Provide a confidential fax line. The fax machine should be secured behind two locked doors.
4. The following samples will **not** be processed and this will delay testing:
  - Unlabeled samples
  - Leaking samples
  - Patient name on the sample does not match name on requisition
  - Samples accompanied by undecipherable, blank or no requisitions
  - Sample collected in wrong container
5. Fold completed laboratory requisition and place in outer pouch of biohazard bag.
6. Place in fridge until it is sent to lab.
7. Verify with the lab the parameters around storage and the time frame the specimen must be received to ensure viability of the sample.
8. Send specimen to laboratory as soon as possible as per [Transportation of Dangerous Goods](#) standards.

### 1.5 Follow up after specimen sent to lab

The regional health authority will automatically receive a copy of a positive lab result of COVID-19, as with any reportable communicable disease. The regional health authority does not receive negative test results.

- **Positive result:** As the regional health authority (RHA) automatically receives a positive lab report, collaborate with them to establish who will notify the client, conduct the case interview, and do contact tracing. For more information see:
  - [COVID-19 Adapted RHA-FNHA Communicable Disease Protocol](#)
  - [COVID-19 – Notice and Follow-up Process for a Confirmed Case in a First Nations Community](#)
  - [Information for Health Directors and Community Leaders-Public Health processes and role of communities during COVID-19](#)
- **Negative result for symptomatic client:**
  - If client symptoms and exposure are still consistent with COVID-19, communicate with the regional health authority (RHA) communicable disease (CD) unit to consult with the medical health officer (MHO) about next steps.
  - Liaise with the physician or nurse practitioner with whom you were working and discuss next steps (i.e. if the client needs other tests/assessments to be completed if it is not COVID-19).


## 2. DOCUMENTATION

In **Appendix A** of [FNHA Considerations for Implementing COVID-19 Specimen Collection in First Nations Communities FAQ](#).

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### 3. RESOURCES

***For healthcare providers:***

BCCDC COVID-19: Adult Viral Testing Guidelines for British Columbia:

[http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/BCCDC\\_PHL\\_Updated\\_nCoV\\_Lab\\_Guidance.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/BCCDC_PHL_Updated_nCoV_Lab_Guidance.pdf)

BCCDC COVID-19: Pediatric Testing Guidelines for British Columbia:

[http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19\\_PediatricTestingGuidelines.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_PediatricTestingGuidelines.pdf)

BCCDC Viral Testing Page for COVID-19:

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/covid-19-care/covid-19-testing/viral-testing>

Understanding COVID-19 tests and interpreting results:

[http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-site/Documents/COVID19\\_InterpretingTesting\\_Results\\_NAT\\_PCR.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-site/Documents/COVID19_InterpretingTesting_Results_NAT_PCR.pdf)

BCCNP COVID-19 FAQ and Resources:

[https://www.bccnp.ca/Standards/Covid\\_19/Pages/faq.aspx](https://www.bccnp.ca/Standards/Covid_19/Pages/faq.aspx)

FNHA Regions-RHA contact information:

<https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-Communicable-Disease-Management-Resources-Regions.pdf>

FNHA, Interim Guide to Using Personal Protective Equipment:

<https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-COVID-19-An-Interim-Guide-to-Using-Personal-Protective-Equipment.pdf>

FNHA, Transportation of Dangerous Goods COVID-19 Specimens: Standard of Practice:

<https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-Transportation-of-Dangerous-Goods.pdf>

Northern Health Authority- COVID- 19 LPN Nasopharyngeal Swab testing course #23122:

<https://learninghub.phsa.ca/Learner/Home>

PHSA eLab Handbook:

<http://www.elabhandbook.info/PHSA/Test/ManageTests.aspx>  
[Understanding COVID-19 tests and interpreting results](#)

COVID-19 Adapted Regional Health Authority- FNHA Communicable Disease Protocol- April 2020:

<https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/COVID-19-Adapted-Regional-Health-Authority-Communicable-Disease-Protocol.pdf>


Video demonstration: UBC and Providence Health Care: How to perform a Nasopharyngeal Swab:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DVJNWefmHjE>  
<http://covid19.providencehealthcare.org/mail/redirect/5567a8f88cee25e7670fdccf28b118ab>

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The COVID-19 testing by Nucleic Acid Test does not detect immunity to COVID-19. It will only detect if the client is currently infected with the virus. [Differences between Viral and Antibody Tests](#)

**For clients:**

Handout on what to do after you get tested:

<http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Guidelines%20and%20Manuals/Epid/CD%20Manual/Chapter%201%20-%20CDC/COVID19-self-isolation-post-testing.pdf>

If you are sick:

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/about-covid-19/if-you-are-sick>

COVID 19 test for children:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AhC6\\_JXagxE&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AhC6_JXagxE&feature=youtu.be)

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BC Children’s & Women’s Hospital. (2015). Collecting nasopharyngeal FLOQSwabs using the Copan UTMkit. Vancouver, British Columbia.

[http://www.elabhandbook.info/phsa/Files/AdditionalFiles%2f1\\_20150127\\_034537\\_001B%20January%202105%20Collecting%20Nasopharyngeal%20FLOQ%20Swabs.pdf](http://www.elabhandbook.info/phsa/Files/AdditionalFiles%2f1_20150127_034537_001B%20January%202105%20Collecting%20Nasopharyngeal%20FLOQ%20Swabs.pdf)

Providence Health Care. (2013). Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) – Specimen Collection: Nasopharyngeal Swabs (NPS). Vancouver, British Columbia. <http://shop.healthcarebc.ca/phc/PHCDSTs/B-00-07-13017.pdf>

**5. APPENDICES**

Appendix A: *Parameters for NP Swab testing for COVID-19*


Appendix B: *Swabs for COVID-19 testing*

Appendix C: *Obtaining a Nasopharyngeal Swab Specimen*

Appendix D: *Lab Requisitions*

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## Appendix A: Parameters for NP Swab testing for COVID-19

### 1. Who can collect specimens?

Health care providers who are able to collect specimen by nasopharyngeal (NP) route for COVID-19 include: Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Registered Nurses (RNs), Registered Psychiatric Nurses (RPNs) and Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs). Clinicians must possess the competence to perform NP swabs safely and have employer support in order to do so. For testing children of any age, the tester must be appropriately trained to perform the nasopharyngeal swab (NP) safely, and there are adequate supports available.

Submission of specimens for COVID-19 testing requires an MSP billing number from a physician or nurse practitioner to submit the sample to the lab.

Processes for supporting all designations of nursing practice varies in each health authority. All nurses are to follow BCCNP, BCCDC and employer guidelines or policies. Nurses are encouraged to reach out to regional nursing teams for further guidance and support.

RNs can collect specimens autonomously or with a client specific order.

LPNs - see: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19-pho-order-lpn-swabbing.pdf>

For more information, see: [https://www.bccnp.ca/Standards/Covid\\_19/Pages/faq.aspx](https://www.bccnp.ca/Standards/Covid_19/Pages/faq.aspx)

There may be physicians or nurse practitioners who want to partner with nurses to offer testing through their MSP billing numbers. Nurses may also explore options through the <sup>new</sup> First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day program.

### 2. Where does collection of specimens occur?

Clients can access testing through physicians' offices, walk-in clinics, collection centres or urgent and primary care centres. A collection centre is a location where a person can be assessed and tested for COVID-19.

Individuals can call 8-1-1 to find the nearest centre or see locations online: BC COVID-19 Collection centre finder (Mobile and desktop); Collection centre finder for Internet Explorer users.

See: (<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/testing>).

### 3. Who should be tested for COVID-19?

See: [COVID-19: Adult Viral Testing Guidelines for British Columbia](#) and [COVID-19: Pediatric Testing Guidelines](#)


Asymptomatic testing is not recommended at this time outside of specific recommendations from a medical health officer (MHO).

It is ideal to do a point of care risk assessment (PCRA), assess for testing eligibility in advance over the phone, and then book the client an appointment for testing to ensure proper preparation.

For clients who are appropriate for swabbing, initiate filling in the COVID-19 swab-testing document. This is found in **Appendix A** of [FNHA Considerations for Implementing COVID-19 Specimen Collection in First Nations Communities FAQ](#).

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**Appendix B: Swabs for COVID-19 testing**

A list of validated swabs/collection devices that are available for use in BC can be found on the [BCCDC Viral Testing](#) page.

If you require nasopharyngeal swabs for COVID-19, order through the usual regional health authority processes or use the BCCDC PHSA laboratory request form found here: [Sample Container Order Form Public Health Laboratory](#)

***Specimen Labelling***

All specimens (cylindrical tube) must have an attached label with the following:

- Patient name
- PHN or date of birth (DOB)
- Specimen type (e.g., NP swab)
- Date and time of collection

Please submit each specimen in an individual, sealed biohazard bag. Include a paper requisition that clearly states the patient information, the ordering physician, and the test name (COVID-19 NAT) (BCCDC, 2020).

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**Appendix C: Obtaining a Nasopharyngeal Swab Specimen**




1. Gently insert the swab along the nasal septum just above the floor of the passage to the nasopharynx until resistance is met
2. Rotate the swab gently against the nasopharyngeal mucosa for 10 - 15 seconds then gently remove swab



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**Appendix D: Laboratory Requisition for COVID-19 testing ([below](#))**

BC CDC Virology Laboratory requisition available online: <http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Forms/Labs/VI%20Req.pdf>

Sample Laboratory Requisition found in [FNHA Considerations for Implementing COVID-19 Specimen Collection in First Nations Communities FAQ](#).

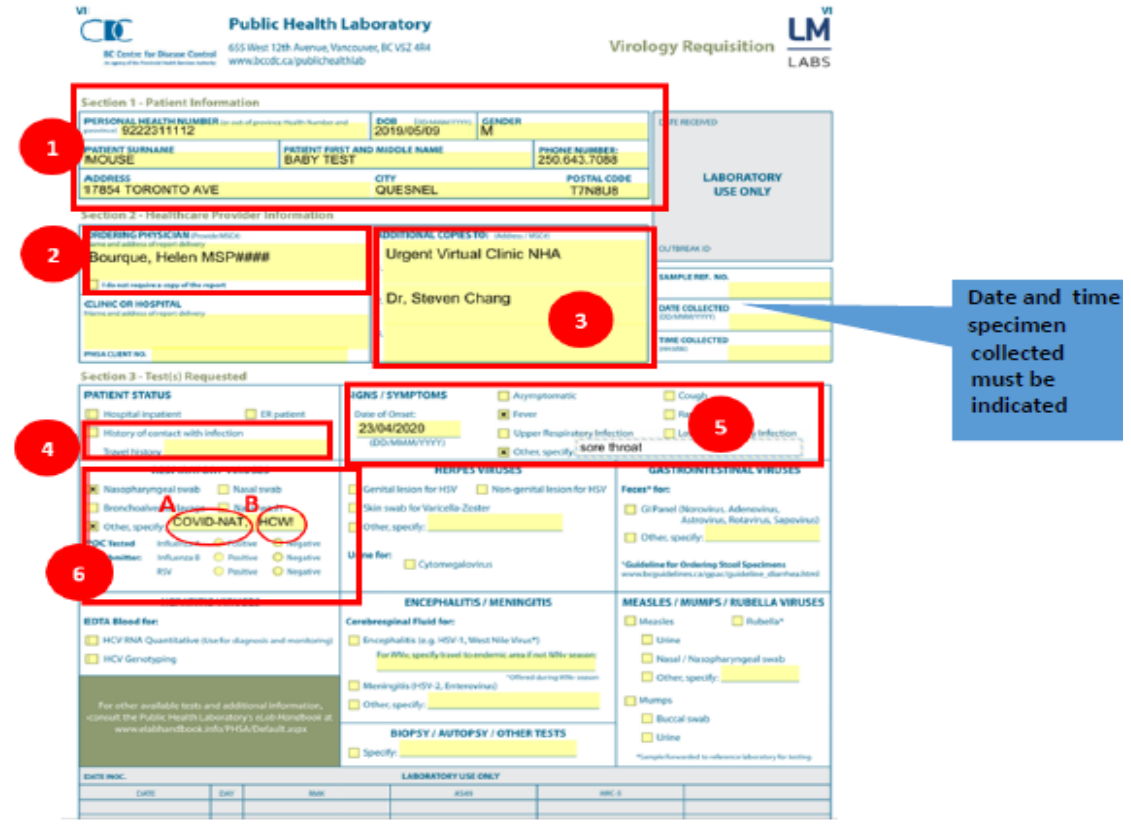
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Laboratory Requisition for COVID-19 testing

**COVID-19 TESTING LAB REQUISITION REQUIREMENTS FOR PROVIDERS**



**Section 1 - Patient Information**

1. PERSONAL HEALTH NUMBER: 9222211112, DOB: 2019/05/09, GENDER: M, PHONE NUMBER: 250.643.7088

2. ORDERING PHYSICIAN: Bourque, Helen MSP###, CLINIC OR HOSPITAL: Urgent Virtual Clinic NHA, Dr. Steven Chang

3. ADDITIONAL COPIES TO: Urgent Virtual Clinic NHA, Dr. Steven Chang

4. PATIENT STATUS: Hospital inpatient, ER patient, History of contact with infection

5. SIGNS / SYMPTOMS: Date of Onset: 23/04/2020, Fever, Upper Respiratory Infection, sore throat

6. RESP. VIRUSES: COVID-NAT, HCW

**LABORATORY USE ONLY**

DATE COLLECTED: [Field]

TIME COLLECTED: [Field]

Date and time specimen collected must be indicated

#	Section	Required	Details
1	Patient Information	Yes	Patient Name, DOB or PHN (both preferred – although some patients do not have PHN or are unable to provide it during their appointment), contact phone # address inc. postal code (address may be “no fixed address”)
2	Ordering Provider	Yes	Name and MSP#
3	Copies to	If applicable	Add in your Health Centre or Nursing Station if you would like to receive a copy of the lab result
4	Patient Status	No	IF APPLICABLE contact or travel history – otherwise, leave blank
5	Signs & Symptoms	No	This section is optional and not required
6	Resp. Viruses		
	A. Test name	Yes	“COVID-NAT” this is the test being ordered
	B. Priority Code	Yes	see page 2 of COVID-19 Testing Guidance for BC for codes

NOTE – A Standard Outpatient Laboratory Requisition is also acceptable if it has the required information

\*Adapted from NHA's COVID-19 TESTING LAB REQUISITION REQUIREMENTS FOR PROVIDERS

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