



Testing for suspected COVID-19

The number of cases reported globally due to COVID-19 are rising. The first confirmed case in New Zealand was reported by the MOH late last week. **The situation is being monitored closely and information is being updated on a regular basis.**

Any patient who is suspected of having COVID-19 and being considered for testing should be discussed with and approved by the local Medical Officer of Health team.

Hospital inpatients within the BOP and Lakes DHB's should be discussed with and approved by the local Infectious Disease Physician.

Case Definition as per NZ MOH - last updated on 28/02/20 (link given below):

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-information-specific-audiences/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-resources-health-professionals/case-definition-covid-19-infection>

Please Note:

Pathlab will NOT be collecting the Nasopharyngeal/Oropharyngeal swabs required for COVID-19 testing. If testing approval is given the specimens **MUST be collected at the site where the patient has been assessed or as instructed by MOH**

There is **NO patient request testing** available. If a patient is concerned about COVID-19, then they should be referred to their doctor or Public Health team

Currently, there are 3 laboratories with testing capability for COVID-19 in NZ, although this may increase in the future. Any test request for COVID-19 that fits the testing criteria and has been approved by Public Health would need to be referred to one of these laboratories.

Specimen types: if approved for testing by Public Health:

- **1x nasopharyngeal swab** for influenza/RSV AND/OR extended respiratory panel.
- **1x nasopharyngeal swab plus 1x oropharyngeal swab in the same viral tube**, for COVID-19 testing.
- **Sputum sample if possible**, for coronavirus testing (test will only be completed if other tests are negative or suspicion is very high).
- **Please Note:** The 2 viral tubes and sputum **MUST BE DOUBLE BAGGED** but can be put in the same specimen bags, and **clearly marked as "Corona virus testing" OR "COVID-19 testing" on the outside.**
- HOSPITAL PATIENTS ONLY: Other specimens i.e. from lower respiratory tract, maybe tested on discussion with the Clinical Microbiologist)
- **Appropriate clinical information must be recorded on the request form:** Patient identification information, Physicians name and contact information, Date and time of sample collection, Specimen type and tests requested, Clinical symptoms and relevant patient history (including travel and contact history, risk factors) and name of Public Health Physician who approved the test.
- Routine tests for acute pneumonia/pneumonitis including bacterial culture and tests for respiratory viruses, including influenza should also be considered



Coronavirus and other respiratory virus specimens can be collected using either the green Virocult swab OR the red Universal Transport Media (UTM) swab.

1x nasopharyngeal swab for influenza/RSV and/or extended respiratory panel.

1x nasopharyngeal swab **plus** 1x oropharyngeal swab **in the same viral tube**, for COVID-19 testing.

Please Note: Guidance for Infection Control precautions and precautions for specimen collection is available:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-information-specific-audiences/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-resources-health-professionals>

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance/infection-prevention-and-control>

Further resources for updated information:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/events-as-they-happen>

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>

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CLINICAL UPDATE

**Please ensure all members of your institution
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