

Nasopharyngeal (N/P) Swab Collection for Viral Studies

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1. Obtain N/P collection supplies from the laboratory. This consists of viral transport medium and an N/P swab. The viral media should be kept refrigerated until use.
2. Remove any mucous from the patient's nose.
3. Estimate the distance to the nasopharynx. *Prior to insertion of the swab, measure the distance from the corner of the nose to the front of the ear and insert the shaft ONLY half this length.* Only one nasopharynx needs to be sampled.
4. Immobilize the patient's head. It is suggested to have the patient sit with head against a wall as there is a tendency to pull away during this procedure.
5. Gently insert the swab along the medial part of the septum, along the base of the nose, until it reaches the posterior nares. Gentle rotation of the swab may be helpful in accomplishing the insertion. (If resistance is encountered on one side, try the other nostril, as the patient may have a deviated septum).
6. Leave the swab in place in the nasopharynx for 10 seconds, then gently rotate and remove swab.
7. Place the NP swab into the viral transport media (usually M5 or UTM but also M4 can be used).
8. Label the viral media with patient label or name and second identifier.
9. Transport to lab immediately or keep on ice until specimen can be sent.
10. Questions should be directed to Microbiology at 212-3025.

