

**SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) Fact Sheet****Nasal (Anterior Nasal) Specimen Collection for SARS-CoV-2 Diagnostic Testing****Nasal (Anterior Nasal) Specimen**

- Nasal sampling is less invasive and results in less patient discomfort than sampling from other upper respiratory anatomical sites.
- A self-administered nasal swab is similar to a nasopharyngeal swab in detecting coronavirus.
- Collection of nasal swab specimens is less technically complex, so can reduce the risk of the spread of infection to healthcare providers, by (1) reducing the duration of the procedure, and (2) allowing the patient to perform self-collection while under supervision.
- It also lessens PPE utilization, given that the patient can perform self-collection under supervision (versus the health care provider performing the collection).
- The procedure for nasal (anterior nasal) sampling is as follows:
  - Using a flocked or spun polyester swab, insert the swab at least 1 cm (0.5 inch) inside the nostril (naris) and firmly sample the nasal membrane by rotating the swab and leaving in place for 10 to 15 seconds.
  - Sample both nostrils with same swab.

**Protective Practices for Healthcare Providers Performing Nasal (Anterior Nares) Specimen Collection**

- For healthcare providers collecting nasal (anterior nares) specimens, or within 6 feet of patients suspected to be infected with SARS-CoV-2:
  - Maintain proper infection control and use recommended personal protective equipment (PPE), which includes an N95 or higher-level respirator (or facemask if a respirator is not available), eye protection, gloves, and a gown, when collecting specimens.
- For healthcare providers who are observing patient self-collection of nasal (anterior nares) samples, so are therefore handling specimens, but are not directly involved in collection and not working within 6 feet of the patient:
  - Follow Standard Precautions
  - Gloves are recommended. Note that healthcare personnel are recommended to wear a form of source control (facemask or cloth face covering) at all times while in the healthcare facility.
  - PPE use can be minimized through patient self-collection *while the healthcare provider maintains at least 6 feet of separation.*

**For Additional Information**

FDA FAQs on Diagnostic Testing for SARS-CoV-2 - <https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/emergency-situations-medical-devices/faqs-diagnostic-testing-sars-cov-2>

CDC Interim Guidelines for Collecting, Handling, and Testing Clinical Specimens from Persons for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), updated as of April 29, 2020 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/lab/guidelines-clinical-specimens.html>

CDC Laboratory Biosafety and COVID-19: Questions and Answers - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/lab/biosafety-faqs.html>