

Throat and Nasopharyngeal Collections

SPECIMEN REQUIREMENTS:

1. **Flu/RSV:** the preferred specimen is a nasal wash but a nasopharyngeal swab is acceptable.
(Note: Medlabs employees will only collect nasopharyngeal swabs.)
2. **Pertussis:** Small tipped Dacron swabs should be used for collection of nasopharyngeal specimens. Calcium alginate, Rayon or cotton swabs **SHOULD NOT** be used, as they can be toxic to B. pertussis.
3. **Group A strep antigen testing:** Use sterile rayon swabs supplied in the strep kit or BD BBL CultureSwabs. Collect specimen from the tonsils and /or the back of the throat. Avoid touching the teeth, gums, tongue and cheek surface.
4. **MRSA by PCR:** Use BBL Culturette® II swabs. Swab the anterior nares, both sides using one swab for each side. (This is just inside the nasal passage, not nasopharyngeal.) Replace the swabs into the transport container for transport to St. Luke's for testing.

MATERIALS:

1. For PERTUSSIS: 2 dacron mini-tipped swabs and one sterile screw-capped tube. Example of swab to use is Puritan REF 25-800D.
2. For Nasopharyngeal/nasal swab: mini-tipped swab or any Dacron, cotton or rayon swab. Example of swab to use is Pur-Wraps Ref 25-1506.
3. For Group A strep: use the swabs that come in the strep kit or use BD BBL CultureSwab collection kits.
4. For MRSA by PCR: use the BD BBL Culturette® II swab. DO NOT USE a wire shaft swab. This test was validated only with the BBL Culturette® II swab.

SPECIMEN COLLECTION:

Pertussis:

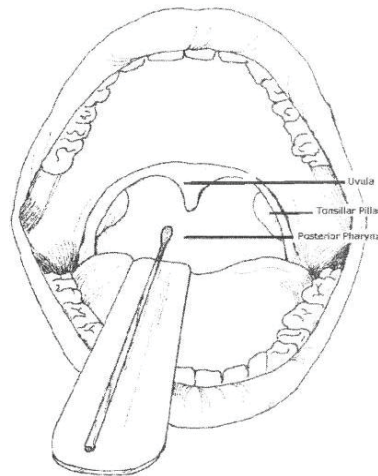
1. Obtain swabs and sterile tube from lab.
2. Using a Dacron swab, collect a nasopharyngeal sample by inserting the swab into the posterior nasopharynx and hold it there for 30-60 seconds or until the patient coughs. Collect a sample from both nostrils and insert them into the sterile, screw-capped tube.
3. Order SBPPCR in Misys.

Nasopharyngeal Swab:

1. Insert the appropriate swab into the nasal passage until resistance is met at the level of the turbinates (less than 1 inch into the nostril).
2. Using a rotating movement, gently wipe the nasopharyngeal area.
3. Repeat in second nostril, using the same swab or a second swab.
4. **For Flu, transport in a dry screw-capped tube. If not tested within one hour, add about 1 ml saline. Eluted swab can be held at 2 - 8° C for 24 hours.**
5. **For RSV, add about 2 ml saline to the specimen before transporting to lab.**
6. Refrigerate for up to 8 hours before testing.

Throat for Group A strep:

1. Gently swab the tonsil or back of throat area.
2. Avoid touching the swabs on teeth, gums, tongue or inside of cheek.
3. You can use a tongue depressor to help access tonsil area. If you see pus or red areas on the tonsils or back of throat, make every effort to touch that area with the swabs.
4. It is not unusual for a patient to “gag” when performing the collections, so be prepared for their reaction.



Nasal swab for MRSA by PCR:

1. Insert one swab just inside the nasal passage (anterior nares).
2. Rotate gently, remove and place swab in transport container.
3. Repeat with the other nostril (anterior nares).
4. Refrigerate specimen until transported to St. Luke's Lab for testing. The PCR procedure tests for organism that is viable or non-viable, so there is no time restraint for transporting. Order SMRPCR in Misys.