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NH PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORIES

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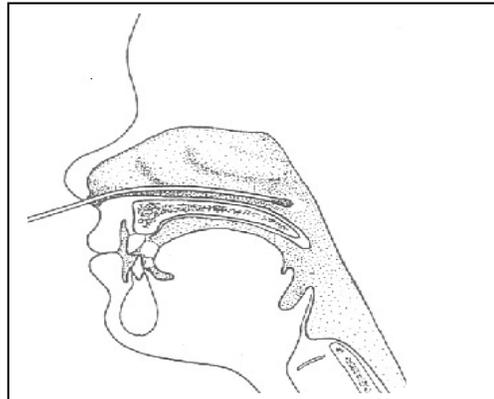
Christine Bean, PhD
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SPECIMEN COLLECTION INSTRUCTIONS FOR MEASLES SEROLOGY AND/OR RT-PCR TESTING

Specimen Collection Instructions for Measles RNA RT-PCR

1. Nasopharyngeal and/or oropharyngeal swabs are preferred samples for detection of measles virus RNA by RT-PCR. Use only nylon or Dacron swabs. Calcium alginate and cotton swabs with wooden shafts are not acceptable.
2. Identify the patient. Complete the requisition form completely & legibly. Requisitions forms can be found online at: <http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/lab/labrequisitions.htm>
3. Label viral transport medium with the patient name and date of collection.
4. *For collection of nasopharyngeal specimen:*

With the patient's neck in an extended position, gently insert a sterile nasopharyngeal swab into the nostril. Pass the swab along the floor of the nose until it contacts the posterior nasopharyngeal wall and gently rotate for 5 seconds to absorb secretions. Remove the swab and place it in the viral transport media. Aseptically break off or cut the applicator leaving the tip in the vial and cap the tube. If a vortex is available, vortex the media with swab for 10 seconds.



For collection of oropharyngeal specimen:

- Depress the tongue gently with a tongue depressor. Sweep the swab back and forth across the posterior pharynx, tonsillar area and any inflamed or spotted areas. Avoid cheeks, teeth, etc.
5. Samples should be collected between the first day of rash up to five days following onset of rash.
 6. Upon collection, swabs should be transferred to 1-3mL of viral transport medium. For urgent cases where viral transport media is not available, placing the swab in a 0.5mL of saline is acceptable.
 7. Samples should be tested within 72 hours of collection. Store specimens between 2-8°C before transporting to the laboratory.



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Specimen Collection Instructions for Measles IgM/IgG Serology Testing

1. Blood for measles serologic testing should be collected aseptically by venipuncture. Use tubes without additives such as plain, red-top tubes or serum separator tubes (gold top).
2. Identify the patient. Complete the requisition form completely & legibly. Requisitions forms are available online at: <http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/lab/labrequisitions.htm>
3. Label the specimen container with the patient name and date of collection.
4. The optimal volume for IgM/IgG testing is a minimum of 0.5 mL of serum.
5. Ideal serum is clear, non-hemolyzed, non-lipemic, and non-icteric.
6. Transport specimen to laboratory as soon as possible after collection. Serum should be tested within 48 hours of collection. Store serum between 2-8°C. If testing is to be prolonged, freeze serum that has been removed from the clot at -20°C or colder.

Measles Specimen Transport:

All specimens should be delivered or mailed to the NH Public Health Laboratories immediately. Keep specimens cold; use cold packs during shipping.

Reminder: All specimens shipped to the PHL must follow current packaging and shipping guidelines and are the responsibility of the shipper.

For questions concerning specimen collection or handling call (603) 271-4661 or 1-800-852-3345 ext. 4661.

Resources:

CDC: <http://www.cdc.gov/measles/lab-tools/serology.html>

CDC: <http://www.cdc.gov/measles/lab-tools/rt-pcr.html>