

Re: COVID-19 diagnostic testing

Audience:	Internal and External Clients Issuing
Division:	Microbiology
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Effective March 12, 2020, COVID-19 testing has been available at Shared Hospital Laboratory, our Microbiology service provider. Testing for COVID-19 uses a primer/probe set that is specific for the virus and has been validated by the microbiology lab. This will facilitate better case detection and surveillance for the virus and improve turn-around-time for results.

The testing and reporting strategy for ED and in-patients will be as follows:

Acceptable swabs types for testing include:

- Mid-turbinate collected in UTM (universal transport media)
- Nasopharyngeal collected in UTM (universal transport media)
- eSwab (see collection instructions below)

Routine respiratory virus testing:

- A primer/probe set targeting the viral 5'-UTR are part of the respiratory virus panel and this will serve as screening test for COVID-19.
- Parainfluenza virus 2 has been removed from the panel.
- Samples that test positive for COVID-19 will undergo confirmatory testing by a second assay that targets multiple viral genes (E-gene and 5'-UTR gene).
- Results will be released as per usual hospital procedures.
- Positive results will be reported by telephone to the on-call infection control and relevant unit.

The Sunnybrook Assessment Centre for COVID-19 has been opened, as have others at a number of hospitals serviced by SHL. Where testing is applicable, the centres will collect specifically for COVID-19 as described below. Testing at Assessment Centres will utilize a slightly different process compared to admitted patients.

The testing and reporting strategy for the Assessment Centre and OHS will be as follows:

Acceptable swabs types for testing include:

- eSwab (see collection instructions below)

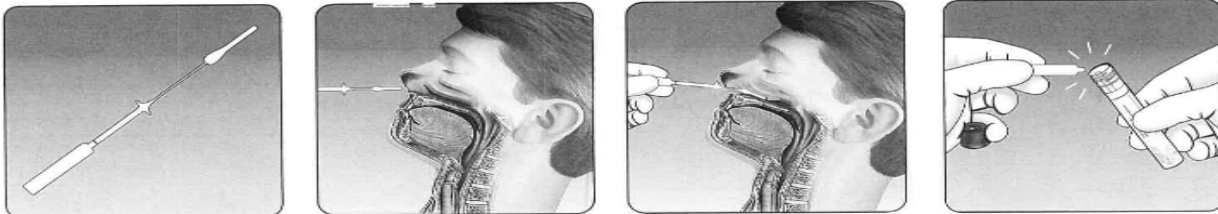
Specific testing for COVID-19:

- If testing specific for COVID-19 is requested the sample will be run on our assay that targets multiple viral genes (E-gene and 5'-UTR).
- Results will be released as per usual hospital procedures.
- Positive results will be reported by telephone to the on-call infection control and OHS
- If patients are registered, their results will display in MyChart when available

E- Swab Collection

When using the E-swab for collecting respiratory samples from suspected COVID 19 patients use a similar approach as would be done with an MT swab. The E-swab is similar to the MT swab, but the tip is slightly larger.

The diagram below illustrates how to use an E-swab to collect a specimen



If you have any questions or concerns please contact Dr. Kevin Katz, Division Head or Laura Baillie, Microbiology Supervisor at extension 2536

The information in this Bulletin is current as of the date indicated above. However, it may be superseded by subsequent communications. Please check to make sure you are reviewing the most recent communiqué."

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