

Patient Testing Guidelines

Preparation

Prepare the patient

- Use developmentally-appropriate language and/or materials to explain the procedure to the patient.
- Use simple, concrete explanations about what will happen. Be honest but use soft, non-threatening words.
- Boston Children's Hospital has educational resources such as "hospital stories" that are effective preparation teaching tools.

NP swab

<https://extapps.childrenshospital.org/EFPEC/Home/Sheet/6252>

Throat swab

<https://extapps.childrenshospital.org/EFPEC/Home/Sheet/6250>

Drive through

<https://extapps.childrenshospital.org/EFPEC/Home/Sheet/6265>

Prepare yourself (and your assistant if you have one).

- Before testing or entering room (they are not always entering room-see car below), don the necessary PPE to perform the test safely.
- Be sure to have all testing materials with you.

Obtaining the specimen

In a drive-up setting

- Safety first: confirm that the car is in park.
- Have the child remain in their car seat if they use one. This is a safe space for them.
- If necessary, have the caregiver get into the back seat next to the child to hold hands or help keep the head still.
- You may need to open the vehicle door to obtain the specimen (with rear-facing car seats or seats in the center seat of the vehicle). With older children you may be able to obtain the specimen through the window.

In an office setting

- Have the child sit next to or in the lap of the caregiver.
- The caregiver can hug the child throughout the test for comfort, and to hold hands or help keep the head still. For small children, it is best if they sit in the adult's lap, both facing the tester and ask the adult to hold the child by crossing the child's arms and hugging them while holding the arms.

Technique for performing a nasopharyngeal swab*

- Tilt the patient's head back to 70 degrees.
- Insert minitip swab with a flexible shaft (wire or plastic) through the nostril parallel to the palate (not upwards) until resistance is encountered or the distance is equivalent to that from the ear to the nostril of the patient, indicating contact with the nasopharynx.
- Swab should reach depth equal to distance from nostrils to outer opening of the ear.
- Gently rub and roll the swab. Leave swab in place for several seconds to absorb secretions. Slowly remove swab while rotating it.
- Specimens can be collected from both sides using the same swab, but it is not necessary to collect specimens from both sides if the minitip is saturated with fluid from the first collection. If a deviated septum or blockage create difficulty in obtaining the specimen from one nostril, use the same swab to obtain the specimen from the other nostril.
- Slowly remove swab while rotating it.

Technique for performing a throat (oropharyngeal) swab*

- Insert swab into the posterior pharynx and tonsillar areas. Rub swab over both tonsillar pillars and posterior oropharynx. Avoid touching the tongue, teeth, and gums.

Connect the family to support and educational resources

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/lab/guidelines-clinical-specimens.html>

<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMvcm2010260>