

Coronavirus

SmartNotes

Coronavirus: WHO Interim Guidelines for Collecting, Handling, and Testing Clinical Specimens

In response to increasing queries regarding viral transport media appropriate for collecting, handling and testing clinical specimens related to coronavirus, we take the opportunity to highlight interim guidelines from the World Health Organization (WHO).

All testing for coronavirus should be conducted in consultation with a healthcare provider. Specimens should be collected as soon as possible once a decision has been made to pursue testing, regardless of the time of symptom onset. The guidance below addresses options for collection of specimens.

At minimum, the WHO recommends that the following respiratory material should be collected:

- upper respiratory specimens: nasopharyngeal and oropharyngeal swab or wash in ambulatory patients
- and/or lower respiratory specimens: sputum (if produced) and/or endotracheal aspirate or bronchoalveolar lavage in patients with more severe respiratory disease.

Specimens for virus detection should reach the laboratory as soon as possible after collection. Correct handling of specimens during transportation is essential. Specimens that can be delivered promptly to the laboratory can be stored and shipped at 2-8 °C. When there is likely to be a delay in specimens reaching the laboratory, the use of viral transport medium is strongly recommended. Specimens may be frozen to -20 °C or ideally -70 °C and shipped on dry ice if further delays are expected. It is important to avoid repeated freezing and thawing of specimens¹.

Thermo Fisher Scientific offer a portfolio of products which includes swabs, transport tubes and media, the following products are applicable to coronavirus sample collection.

Product code	Product	Pack size	
R12505	M4RT (3 mL) Tube	72/pk	
R12587	M4RT (3 mL) Tube	72/pk	
R12588	M4RT (3mL) Flock Swab Kit	100/pk	
R12700	M4RT (3 mL) without Beads Tube	72/pk	
R12705	M4RT (3 mL) without Beads NP Swab Kit	100/pk	
SK01360	M4RT NPG Swab Kit, No Beads (3 mL)	100/pk	
SK01361	M4RT NPG Swab Kit, No Beads (1 mL)	100/pk	
R12548	Polyester Tipped Oropharyngeal Swab	1000/pk	
R12544	Disposable Sampling Swab, 100 mm breakpoint	100/pk	
R12680	Disposable Sampling Swab, 80 mm breakpoint	100/pk	

References

1. WHO reference number: WHO/COVID-19/laboratory/2020.5

 For product advice, please contact your local Microbiology sales representative or visit [thermofisher.com/coronaviruscare](https://www.thermofisher.com/coronaviruscare)

For more information on guidelines, refer to **World Health Organisation (WHO)** or local authorities.

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