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|  | Standard Operating Procedure COVID-19 testing in Long-term Care and Assisted Living | Doc. No. | D-00-16-30051 |
| | | Rev.: | 05 |
| | | Rev. Date: | Oct 05, 2023 |

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| SITE APPLICABILITY: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All VCH Long-term Care homes and Assisted Living sites |
| PURPOSE: |
| <p>To provide a standard process for nurses to perform COVID-19 testing using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nasopharyngeal (NP) Swab Swish, Gargle and Spit Throat swab |
| SCOPE: |
| RNs, RPNs, LPNs |
| RESPONSIBILITIES: |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Site Leadership is responsible for determining operational implementation of this SOP. Site leadership is responsible for ensuring adequate Nasopharyngeal Swabs / Swish, Gargle and Spit kits or equivalent and Transport of Dangerous Goods packaging (TDG) are stored at the home – based on size of home or assisted living site to manage mass swabbing in the event of an outbreak. Site Leadership is responsible for ensuring nurses receive the appropriate training and supplies to perform this activity, and ensure a site-specific workflow is developed to support site-specific details. Nurses will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure their manager or program supports them to test for COVID-19 using this SOP and any site-specific workflows. Use this SOP to ensure they meet the requirements set out by the Medical Health Officer’s Order under the Long Term care and Assisted Living Act to test for COVID-19 Follows competency guidance on P6 Follow: Transportation of Dangerous Goods – Coronavirus (COVID-19) Specimen SOP guidance Initiate contact and droplet precautions for any residents requiring testing immediately Collect sample and inform MRP of testing (i.e. leave a message or fax). A resident/tenant specific order is not required. See MHO order: http://www.vch.ca/Documents/PHA%20Nas_Swabs_Mar_18_2020.pdf Initiate line list and inform MHO of suspected COVID-19 case and review Viral Respiratory Illness Toolkit Long-Term Care Facility Guide |

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PROCEDURE:

Resident/Tenant Eligibility

Exclusion: NP swabs may not be performed on Visitors or Contracted Staff unless directed by the Medical Health Officer.

Nurses will use the Resident Screening tool to guide their clinical assessment (i.e. testing eligibility). <http://www.vch.ca/Documents/LTC-COVID-19-resident-screening-tool.pdf>

Tenants in Assisted Living who are ambulatory and are able can be directed to the nearest testing centre. [Testing Centre Finder \(or see BCCDC website\)](#)

NOTE: It is very important to follow the chosen procedure carefully to obtain an accurate result.

Supplies

- PPE – Gloves, gown, medical grade mask, eye protection (safety glasses, goggles or visor)
- Alcohol Based Hand Rub (ABHR)
- NP swab kit **OR** Swish, Gargle and Spit kit
- Tissues
- Garbage container
- TDG packaging

Procedure

- Review this SOP
- Don appropriate PPE for contact and droplet precautions and perform hand hygiene with soap and water/ABHR as required through-out procedure
- Gather supplies

A. NP swabs

Assess resident's ability to participate in the procedure and determine whether resident would benefit from having someone else present when performing test e.g. another member of the health care team / essential visitor. Note: anyone present during test must perform hand hygiene and don full PPE including eye protection as per Contact and Droplet Precautions.

1. Don appropriate PPE for contact and droplet precautions and perform hand hygiene with soap and water / ABHR as required through-out procedure
2. Confirm resident identity using 2 identifiers
3. Ensure resident is in a comfortable position with the head supported
4. Explain procedure and obtain verbal informed consent
5. Using the Copan Flocked Swab follow directions on attached poster
6. On completion ensure the lid of the container is closed tight
7. Remove PPE following doffing procedures

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8. Labelling, Lab Requisitioning and packaging see p4

Post Procedure Care

Unintended outcomes of NP swabs may (rarely) include discomfort, pain, and nasopharyngeal bleeding.

- If pain occurs, stop the procedure. Re-attempt using the other nostril. If pain continues consult a physician/nurse practitioner.
- If bleeding occurs, follow Elsevier Clinical Skills for a [nose bleed](#)

Note: Specimen collection devices for nasopharyngeal swabs may change due to ongoing supply/demand for tests. If using swabs from VCH COVID-19 Central Supply, questions regarding how to use the swabs should be directed to: VCHCOVID-19CentralSupply@vch.ca.

B. Swish, Gargle and Spit

Resident must not eat, drink, vape, smoke, brush their teeth or chew gum **at least 1 hour** before the test.

Assessment

Assess resident's ability to perform Swish, Gargle and Spit procedure. Consider whether resident is at risk of aspiration. If risk of aspiration or unable to perform gargle and resident is not able to tolerate an NP or throat swab omit gargle from procedure and have resident perform a Swish and Spit (Mouth Rinse).

Some residents may benefit from a practice run with 5mls of tap water following the procedure outlined below. Note: must wait for 2 hours after practice before taking sample.

Determine whether resident would benefit from having someone else present when performing test e.g. another member of the health care team / essential visitor. Note: anyone present during test must perform hand hygiene and don full PPE including eye protection as per Contact and Droplet Precautions.

Procedure

1. Don appropriate PPE for contact and droplet precautions and perform hand hygiene with soap and water / ABHR as required through-out procedure Confirm resident identity using 2 identifiers
2. Ensure resident is in a comfortable position
3. Explain procedure and obtain verbal informed consent
4. **Confirm resident has not eaten, drunk, vaped, smoked, brushed their teeth or chewed gum for at least one hour or have not perform a 'practice' gargle in the last 2 hours**
5. Provide resident with the C&S container and 5 mL normal saline or tapwater in medicine cup
6. **i. Swish and Gargle Method:** Instruct resident to swish the solution around in mouth for 5 seconds, then tip head back and gargle for 5 seconds. Repeat swish and gargle two more times (30 seconds total)
ii. Swish (Mouth Rinse) Method: Instruct resident to swish the solution around in mouth for a minimum of 10 seconds aiming for 30 seconds.
7. Instruct resident to spit the solution into the specimen container

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8. Ensure the lid of the container is closed tight
9. Inspect sample for food debris. If present discard sample in biohazard container and repeat procedure in 2 hours. Ensure resident does not eat, drink, vape, smoke, brush their teeth or chew gum as above
10. Remove PPE and perform hand hygiene
11. Labelling, Lab Requisitioning and packaging see p4 (See [Instruction Poster](#))

C. Throat Swab

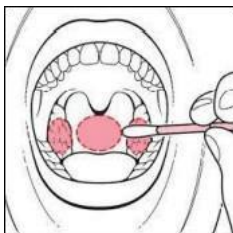
Assess resident's ability to participate in the procedure and determine whether resident would benefit from having someone else present when performing test e.g. another member of the health care team / essential visitor. Note: anyone present during test must perform hand hygiene and don full PPE including eye protection as per Contact and Droplet Precautions

Note: anyone present during test must perform hand hygiene and don full PPE including eye protection.

Procedure

Be aware that resident may gag or vomit. If they gag or vomit, stop procedure. Reconsider NP swab/swish, gargle, spit.

1. Don appropriate PPE for contact and droplet precautions and perform hand hygiene with soap and water
/ ABHR as required through-out procedure
2. Confirm resident identity using 2 identifiers
3. Using the Copan Flocked Swab (same swab kit as used for NP swabs)
4. Inspect mouth and throat, use flashlight light, if needed
5. Using the plastic shafted swab in the kit, vigorously swab the back of the throat around the tonsillar area



6. Place the swab into the transport medium and break off the shaft
7. Ensure the lid of the container is closed tight
8. Remove PPE following doffing procedures
9. Labelling, Lab Requisitioning and packaging see below.

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Labelling Samples

Incorrect or incompletely labelled specimens may be rejected by the lab as required by the BC accreditation program. All specimens (including staff specimens) must be legibly labelled with the following information:

1. 3 resident identifiers
 - **Legalname, first, middle and last name,**
 - **Birth date**
 - **PHN#**
2. Type of Sample (NP swab, gargle or throat swab)
3. MRP – include full name
4. Site Name – written out in full i.e. no abbreviations
5. Date and time sample obtained

Lab Requisitioning

1. Use [BCCDC Laboratories Virology Requisition Form](#) unless otherwise directed.
2. Add Personal Health Number (PHN) to ensure the result goes to Care Connect.
3. Add resident information- include legal name, DOB, Sex and address
4. Under “Ordering Physician”:
5. Add the ordering Primary Care Provider’s MSP number.
6. Physician MSP Numbers can be found in the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC [Physician Directory](#)
7. In “Additional Copies to”
 - a. Add testing nurse’s name, site address, phone, and fax number

Add Primary Care Provider (i.e. GP or nurse practitioner) and any other relevant medical providers.

8. Under “Respiratory Pathogens” check “COVID-19” and to rule out other viral illness also check “Influenza A, Influenza B, RSV” on the [Virology Request Form](#).
 - a. Indicate sample site:
 - i. NP Swab - Nasopharynx
 - ii. Saline Swish, Gargle and Spit & Throat Swab - Throat
 - b. Indicate correct container type

Transport to Lab

- Package sample as per TDG. Transport sample to lab as soon as possible to ensure cell integrity. Note: Unrefrigerated samples are stable for 24 hours; refrigerated samples are stable for up to 7 days.
- Transportation of COVID-19 specimens by vehicle falls under the federal Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act (TDG). Follow [Transportation of Dangerous Goods - Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Specimen SOP](#).

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- TDG containers from all Long Term Care Facilities except for Providence Health Care LTC are to be sent by courier (eg: Novex 604-278-1935 or www.novex.ca) to:

Vancouver General
Hospital Medical
Microbiology Lab 855
West 12th Avenue
Jim Pattison Pavilion
Vancouver, BC V5Z 1M9
Phone: 1-800-992-8801 or 604-875-4577

Documentation

Document in your sites usual location for lab tests and lab results. If you don't have one, please contact your program leadership and Clinical Informatics representatives.

Test Results

1. Each participating site is responsible for ensuring they have a system in place for ensuring test results are:
 - Tracked to ensure completion by lab
 - Reviewed by a nurse or physician/nurse practitioner
 - Tenants in assisted living who are able may obtain their test results directly from BCCDC Lab by phone, text message, or online). See [BCCDC COVID-19 Testing - Test Results](#)
2. **Positive Results:** The MHO will be notified of positive results and will initiate a risk assessment and provide guidance.
 - Inform MRP and site leadership if you receive a positive resident result so that outbreak management plans can be initiated.
 - Arrange for the MRP or designate to inform resident as appropriate and family members / substitute decision maker.
3. **Negative Results:** Ensure residents and families are informed of negative results as appropriate, however

if a result is negative and symptoms have not resolved or are worsening a second test may be required discuss with MRP. The person must remain under droplet and contact precautions until symptoms resolve or as advised by MRP / MHO.

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GENERAL REQUIREMENTS:

Prescriber Orders

- COVID-19 testing by nurses in Long Term Care and assisted living is permitted without a client specific order:
http://www.vch.ca/Documents/PHA%20Nas_Swabs_Mar_18_2020.pdf
- As part of Outbreak management the MHO, a physician or nurse practitioner will provide orders for testing asymptomatic residents / tenants and staff.

Competency

Nurses will demonstrate competency to perform COVID-19 testing by:

- Reviewing [Nursing Orientation: Covid Testing Locations](#) on Learning Hub Complete numbers 1,3,4,5,7,8
- Reviewing Resident Screening Tool <http://www.vch.ca/Documents/LTC-COVID-19-resident-screening-tool.pdf>
- Reviewing this SOP
- Demonstrating clinical competence through observation and return demonstration with a trained / experienced regulated healthcare professional.

Ordering Supplies

NP Swabs: order through the VCH blastramp site: <https://vch.blastramp.com>

Swish, Gargle and Spit: order through Lillian.simon@vch.ca

TDG Supplies

- VCH/ PHC TDG SAF-T-PAK STP-210 containers may be ordered through ePro: #00023292
- Long Term Care and Assisted Living Order Cat B P650 TDG Containers. See [list of certified vendors or contact](#)

REFERENCES/ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS:

- [Poster - How To Use Guide: Nasopharyngeal Flocked Swabs and Universal Transport Medium \(UTM\)](#)
- [Video – How to perform a Nasopharyngeal Swab \(includes anatomical considerations\)](#)
- [Animated Video – How to perform a throat swab Elsevier Clinical Skills](#)
- [Long Term care and Assisted Living Act : Medical Health Officer Order under the Public Health and Long- Term and Assisted Living Acts for Nurses to Collect NP swabs](#)
- [Transportation of Dangerous Goods - Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Specimen SOP](#)
- [Video Swish, Gargle and Spit](#)
- [Mouth Rinse / Gargle Test Poster](#)

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| APPROVALS | | |
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| <i>Practice Director</i> | <i>Prof Practice Director, Nursing & Allied Health, Long-term Care, VCH</i> | <i>October 3rd, 2023</i> |
| <i>Regional Leader</i> | <i>Regional Leader, LTC, Assisted Living and Supported Housing, Regional Programs and Service Integration, VCH</i> | <i>December, 12th 2020</i> |
| <i>Clinical Nurse Specialist</i> | <i>Clinical Nurse Specialist, Interdisciplinary Long-Term Care Team, VCH</i> | <i>December, 12th 2020</i> |
| <i>LTC EOC</i> | <i>VCH/PHC LTC EOC for COVID-19</i> | <i>December, 12th 2020</i> |

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| DEVELOPERS | | |
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|---------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| <i>Development Team Members</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Clinical Nurse Specialist, Interdisciplinary Long-Term Care Team, VCH</i> • <i>Education Coordinator, Interdisciplinary Long-Term Care Team, VCH</i> • <i>Regional Manager Infection Prevention and Control Community, Long Term Care, Ambulatory Care, Infection Control, VCH</i> • <i>Clinical Educator, Extended Care Unit, VCH</i> • <i>Clinical Educator, Long Term Care, VCH</i> | <i>December, 12th 2020</i> |
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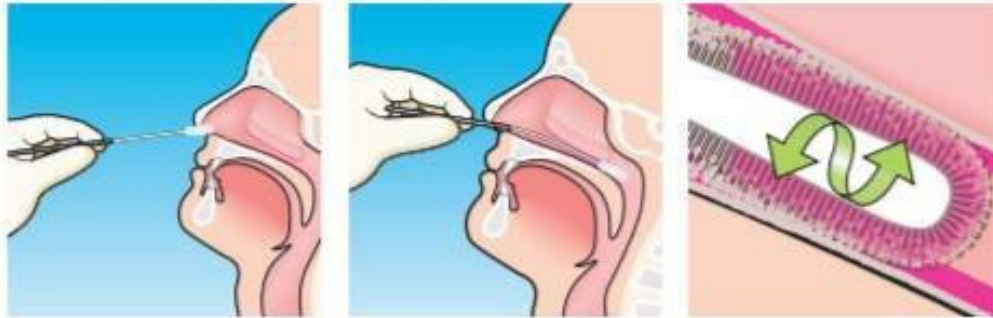
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| REVISION HISTORY | | | |
|-------------------------|--|--|--|

| Revision# | Description of Changes | Prepared by | Effective Date |
|-----------|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| 00 | <i>Initial Release</i> | <i>Clinical Nurse Specialist, Interdisciplinary Long-Term Care Team, VCH</i> | <i>December, 12th 2020</i> |
| 01 | <i>Exclusion to performing NP swabs on visitors/Contracted Staff</i> | <i>Clinical Nurse Specialist, Interdisciplinary Long-Term Care Team, VCH</i> | <i>May, 10th 2021</i> |
| 02 | <i>Added VGH Address to the 'Transport to Lab' section</i> | <i>Clinical Nurse Specialist, Interdisciplinary Long-Term Care Team, VCH Director, Quality & Patient Safety</i> | <i>June 3rd, 2021</i> |
| 03 | <i>Removed Dr. Althea Hayden as MHO ordering provider Updated broken links</i> | <i>Clinical Nurse Specialist, Interdisciplinary Long-Term Care Team, VCH Director, Quality & Patient Safety</i> | <i>September 22, 2022</i> |
| 04 | <i>Added link to Viral Respiratory Illness Toolkit Long Term Care Facility Guide Under lab requisitioning amended #8 to include checking for other viral illnesses</i> | <i>Clinical Nurse Specialist,</i> | <i>October 07, 2022</i> |
| 05 | <i>Under transport to lab, amended #3 with new lab location</i> | <i>Regional Practice Initiatives lead, LTC, professional practice</i> | <i>October 5, 2023</i> |

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How To Use Guide

Nasopharyngeal Flocked Swabs and Universal Transport Medium (UTM)



1. Gently insert the swab along the nasal septum just above the floor of the passage to the nasopharynx until resistance is met
2. Rotate the swab gently against the nasopharyngeal mucosa for 10 - 15 seconds then gently remove swab



3. After the swab is removed from the patient place it into the tube of UTM transport medium all the way to the bottom of the tube
4. Holding the swab shaft close to the rim of the tube, break the applicator shaft at the colored breakpoint indication line. **Hold the tube opening away from your face.**

ORDERING INFORMATION:

Individual Components:

- 330C Universal Transport Medium (UTM) tube for Viruses, Chlamydia, Mycoplasma and Ureaplasma
- 503CS01 Flexible Minitip Flocked Swab

Collection Kit:

- 305C Kit comprises UTM tube plus Flexible Minitip Flocked Swab



Copan Diagnostics Inc.
 26055 Jefferson Ave. • Murrieta, California 92562 USA
 Toll Free: (800) 216-4016 (US & Canada)
 Phone: (951) 696-6957 Fax: (951) 600-1832
 E-Mail: info@copanusa.com
 www.copanusa.com

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COPAN
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UTM
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