

LAB ALERT #8: SARS-CoV-2 TESTING UPDATES (3/13)

On March 13, 2020, the Association of Public Health Laboratories, on behalf of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, provided the following update for SARS-CoV specimen collection:

Going forward, CDC is now recommending collecting only the NP swab. This recommendation to drop the requirement for the OP swab is based on an analysis of 1231 pairs of NP and OP swabs tested in CDC's laboratory, which showed that the negative predictive value of an NP swab alone (compared with that of obtaining both swabs and testing separately) was 98.2%. Furthermore, there is indirect evidence that the negative predictive value of testing samples that are likely to have viable virus (i.e., those with Ct values below 33) is even higher (99.0%).

Moving forward, please only collect a nasopharyngeal (NP) swab for individuals with symptoms of COVID-19. Also collect a sputum for individuals producing sputum; do not induce.

Additionally, in order to conserve critical specimen collection supplies, the SDPHL is no longer requesting duplicate specimens for SARS-CoV-2 testing and respiratory pathogen panel (RPP) testing. A single NP swab in viral transport medium will be used for both tests.

For facilities that provide influenza, RSV, and other respiratory testing, SDPHL will accept residual NP specimens in VTM for SARS-CoV-2 testing. SDPHL requires a minimum specimen of 1.5 ml for testing.

For any questions regarding the information provided in this LAB ALERT, contact the South Dakota Public Health Laboratory at 605-773-3368.

Please distribute this LAB ALERT to others in your facility that may need this information.