Direct Swab RT PCR Supplemental Information

Real-Time Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT PCR) Assays offer a molecular option for the detection of Herpes Simplex 1 and 2 as well as Varicella Zoster DNA in the specimen. In these Direct Swab Assays, fluorescent probes are used together with corresponding forward and reverse primers to amplify HSV or VZV and internal control targets. A well-conserved region of the HSV or VZV DNA polymerase gene is targeted to identify viral DNA in the specimen and internal controls are used to detect PCR failure and/or inhibition.

Specimen Collection

1. Acceptable specimen types are cutaneous and/or mucocutaneous lesion swabs stored in UTM (BD UVT), Remel M4, Remel, M4RT, Remel M5, Remel M6 and transport media.
2. Do not use calcium alginate swabs. They may contain substances that inhibit PCR testing.

Specimen Identification

1. Complete all the provider and patient information sections of the SDPHL requisition slips.
2. Label each specimen with the date of collection and the patient's first and last name. Unlabeled specimens or specimens with a patient identifier that does not match the identifier on the requisition form **will not be tested**.

Interpretation of Results

1. Detected – Result indicates the presence of virus DNA in the patient sample.
2. Not Detected – Result indicates the absence of virus DNA in the patient sample.
3. Invalid – Result indicates inability to conclusively determine the presence or absence of virus DNA in the patient sample. This may be due to: 1) Internal Control (IC) failure or 2) failure to detect sufficient specimen volume. The sample needs to be retested.