

COVID-19: Observed Self-Collection Nasal

OBSERVED SELF-COLLECTION FOR NASAL SWAB

The FDA recommends health care providers provide visual (written or video) step-by-step instructions, in addition to verbal instructions, to patients who, in a health care setting, are self-collecting anterior nares (nasal) samples for SARS-CoV-2 testing. Written instructions may be provided on paper or electronically.

The instructions provided to patients should incorporate the following information:

- The entire tip of the swab (usually $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch) should be placed inside the nose, and the side of the swab tip should be rubbed with moderate pressure against as much of the wall of the anterior nares region as possible, moving the tip through a large circular path inside the nose.
- At least four of these sweeping circles should be performed in each nostril using the same swab. This should take approximately 10-15 seconds per nostril.
- Simply twirling the swab against one part of the inside of the nose or leaving the swab in the nose for 10-15 seconds, is not proper technique and may result in an insufficient sample.

Two examples of written instructions are available from:

- Audere's HealthPulse*: [Nasal Swab Instructions | HealthPulse \(healthpulsenow.org\)](https://www.audere.org/healthpulse/nasal-swab-instructions)
- CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/testing/How-To-Collect-Anterior-Nasal-Specimen-for-COVID-19.pdf>

**Audere, a Washington State nonprofit corporation, has granted a general right of reference to any organization who wishes to access and use these instructions for lower nasal swabs administered at a testing site. These recommendations apply specifically to patients who are self-collecting in a health care setting.*

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why does the collection need to be observed by a Healthcare provider?

The Federal Drug Administration (FDA) Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for the COVID-19 test that PDL performs requires the COVID-19 collection to either be performed by a healthcare provider or observed by a healthcare provider. This ensures that the collection is adequate for testing and reduces the risk of false negative test results.

What personal protective equipment (PPE) should be worn by the observer?

The observer should adhere to Center for Disease control guidance and infection control practices for PPE.

Per CDC: *For healthcare providers who are handling specimens, but are not directly involved in collection (e.g. handling self-collected specimens) and not working within 6 feet of the patient, follow Standard Precautions. Healthcare providers should wear a form of source control (face mask) at all times while in the healthcare facility.*

Healthcare providers can minimize PPE use if patients collect their own specimens while maintaining at least 6 feet of separation. For example, the provider should wear a face mask, gloves, and a gown.

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How to Collect an Anterior Nasal Swab Specimen for COVID-19 Testing



Use **only** an authorized specimen collection kit given to you by your healthcare provider or personnel at the testing center, or purchased over the counter in a pharmacy or other store. Follow the instructions included with the specimen collection kit which may be used on-site or at home. Use **only** materials provided in the kit to collect and store or mail the specimen, unless the kit says to do otherwise. These instructions can also be used with self-testing kits if the kit specifies anterior nasal swab collection.

Set-up

1. Disinfect the surface where you will open the collection kit. Remove and lay out contents of kit. Read instructions before starting specimen collection.



2. Wash hands with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer.

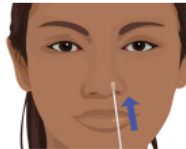


Specimen collection

3. Remove the swab from the package. Do not touch the soft end with your hands or anything else.



4. Insert the entire soft end of the swab into your nostril **no more than 3/4 of an inch (1.5 cm)** into your nose.



5. Slowly rotate the swab, gently pressing against the inside of your nostril at least 4 times for a total of 15 seconds. Get as much nasal discharge as possible on the soft end of the swab.



6. Gently remove the swab.



7. Using the same swab, repeat steps 4–6 in your other nostril with the same end of the swab.

Preparation of specimen for return

8. Place the swab in the sterile tube and snap off the end of the swab at the break line, so that it fits comfortably in the tube. Place the cap on the tube and screw down tightly to prevent leakage.



9. Wash hands or re-apply hand sanitizer.



10. Place the tube containing the swab in the biohazard bag provided and seal the bag.



Returning the specimen and clean-up

11. Give the bag with the swab to testing personnel or follow the instructions for returning the specimen for testing.



12. Throw away the remaining specimen collection kit items.



13. Wash hands or re-apply hand sanitizer.

