# NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (2019-nCoV) LABORATORY TESTING GUIDANCE

## Appropriate Clinical Specimens for 2019-nCoV Testing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Testing Method</th>
<th>Upper Respiratory Specimens (required)</th>
<th>Lower Respiratory Specimens (optional)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019-nCoV RT-qPCR</td>
<td>Combined NP and OP swabs in one tube of VTM</td>
<td>BAL, tracheal aspirate, or sputum</td>
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</table>

### Pre-approval

Person Under Investigation (PUI) must be assessed by your local health department and be assigned a PUI#. CDPH must be notified of new PUIs by emailing novelvirus@cdph.ca.gov.

- Serial clearance specimens from confirmed cases and specimens from asymptomatic contacts should be sent to your local public health laboratory for testing or forwarding to CDC.

### Specimen Collection

**Upper Respiratory Specimens** (both swabs are required):
- Nasopharyngeal swab
- Oropharyngeal swab
- Use sterile, synthetic swabs. **VRDL requests that both swabs be placed together in a single sterile collection tube** containing 2-3 ml of viral transport medium. Ensure the cap is screwed on tightly and sealed with parafilm.

**Lower Respiratory Specimens** (optional):
- Sputum: 2-3 ml in a sterile, leak-proof, screw-cap sputum collection container. Induction of sputum is not recommended.
- Bronchoalveolar lavage, tracheal aspirate: 2-3 ml aspirate in a sterile, leak-proof, screw-cap sputum collection container.

### Specimen storage

- Store all specimens at 4°C and ship on cold pack within 24 to 72 hours.

### Shipping to VRDL

Specimen shipment to VRDL requires prior consultation with your local public health department. To ship approved specimens:

- Complete the [VRDL General Purpose Specimen Submittal Form](#) for EACH SPECIMEN (see example):
  - Disease Suspected: Novel Coronavirus 2019
  - Case ID#: assigned NCOV ID (aka PUI ID #)
  - Clinical Findings: Hospitalization status, symptoms, and exposure history (e.g., travel or contact with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 case-patient)
  - Include hard copy of the VRDL General Purpose Specimen Submittal Form.

- Notify VRDL by secure email to VRDL.Mail@cdph.ca.gov.

- Ship approved specimens to: CDPH VRDL Attn: Specimen Receiving 850 Marina Bay Parkway Richmond, CA 94804

- Weekend deliveries to VRDL must be coordinated in advance with VRDL-MELs and by courier. Provide the courier with weekend points of contact for your laboratory and VRDL. **Do not use FedEx or GSO on weekends.**