

# Guidance on Submitting Measles Samples to VRDL

## Effective 2/13/2015

**IMPORTANT:** Prior to specimen submissions to CDPH or the CDC, you must inform or consult your local health department. Under Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations, Section 2500 health care providers are required to report suspect measles cases immediately by telephone to the local health officer.

The CDPH Viral and Rickettsial Disease Laboratory (VRDL) will conduct measles PCR testing only in patients who report rash. VRDL will not perform measles PCR or IgM testing in patients who do not have a rash.

**To submit specimens from suspect measles cases or contacts, please do the following:**

1. **Contact CDPH to notify us that specimens are coming.** This can be done by emailing us at [measlesreport@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:measlesreport@cdph.ca.gov) and including the following data elements:
  - Name and date of birth associated with the specimens being submitted
  - If specimens are from a case, please provide the rash onset date, if known
  - Epi-link to a confirmed case, if known
  - If there is any reason the specimen would be considered high priority (see item 3)
  - If specimens are from a recent vaccine recipient, please indicate date of vaccination (see item 4)
  - Name of courier service and specimen tracking number
  - Name and phone number of investigator in your jurisdiction who can provide additional information, if needed.
2. **Complete the general specimen submittal form** (<http://tinyurl.com/okuqp72>) and submit with specimens.
  - **If the specimen you are submitting is high priority, please write ‘High Priority’ on the specimen submittal form.** Record package tracking number to help expedite processing at CDPH.
  - Indicate if the specimen(s) is from a suspect case OR from a contact (for IgG testing only). If the specimen is from a suspect case, please note the rash onset date, if available.

Due to the high demand for testing, we are requesting that only viral specimens (throat swab and/or urine) are submitted on suspect measles cases as long as they can be collected within the appropriate time frame (within 7-10 days after rash onset). This allows us to reserve serologic testing for potentially exposed contacts, of which there are many.

**Also note that measles specimens should not be packaged in with specimens needing influenza or bacterial testing.**

3. **If your specimen is considered high priority, please refer to the CD Brief issue 15-06, sent on Friday, February 13, 2015 for instructions on labeling the outside of the shipping box.**

**High priority specimens are those from:**

- **Suspect measles cases who meet these criteria:**
  - A patient with classic measles illness (cough, coryza, conjunctivitis, fever over 101 and descending maculopapular rash)
  - A patient with rash and fever who has high risk contacts (infants, pregnant women, immunocompromised persons)
  - A pregnant woman or immunocompromised person with fever and rash
  - A patient with rash and fever who is a contact to a known case
  
- **Contacts of measles cases (measles IgG testing only) who meet these criteria:**
  - A patient who is at high risk of complications (pregnant, immunocompromised) and may require post-exposure prophylaxis

If you are unsure whether your specimen meets the high priority designation, please contact the CDPH Immunization Branch.

**4. Specimens from patients with febrile rash illness who have received MMR vaccine within the prior 2 weeks, AND when genotyping results would impact public health action:**

- Please submit viral specimens (throat swab and urine) directly to CDC for RTqPCR and genotyping. CDC will expedite genotyping of these cases to distinguish between wild type and vaccine strains.
- If your lab has the extract prepared, you may also ship the extract along with the original specimen.
- The genotyping turnaround time is within 2 days of specimen receipt.
- Specimen submittal instructions:
  - **Please submit specimens through your local public health laboratory (PHL).** PHLs will have the appropriate CDC submittal forms for specimens coming from California.
  - Request Test Order Code “CDC-10240 Measles Detection and Genotyping.”
  - Be sure to indicate that specimen is from a recent MMR recipient.
  - Please refer to the CD Brief issue 15-06, sent on Friday, February 13, 2015 for contact information at CDC.
- **Only specimens from patients who have received recent MMR vaccination and who require rapid genotyping should be submitted to CDC.**

Thank you for all of your hard work on measles. If you have any questions about specimen collection, submittal, or shipping, please contact the CDPH VRDL Medical and Epidemiology Liaison Section (MELS) at 510-307-8585. If you have any questions about whether a measles test is appropriate or a priority, please contact the CDPH Immunization Branch at 510-620-3737 or send an inquiry to [measlesreport@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:measlesreport@cdph.ca.gov).