

Vermont Department of Health Laboratory
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**INSTRUCTIONS FOR COLLECTION AND PACKAGING OF NASOPHARYNGEAL
SPECIMENS FOR *BORDETELLA* spp. PCR AND/OR CULTURE
VDHL KIT # 5**

PLEASE READ INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY BEFORE COLLECTING SPECIMEN

In order to comply with shipping regulations and ensure the safety of laboratory personnel and those involved in the transport of specimens, and to maintain integrity of the specimens, the Vermont Department of Health Laboratory (VDHL) will accept for testing only those specimens that are packaged according to the instructions below.

The kit should contain:

- Insulated shipping container
- Container(s) of cold pack (e.g., Gel-Pak)
- One labeled tube of Regan-Lowe charcoal medium
- 1 Nasopharyngeal Swab (Copan Flocked swab on flexible plastic shaft)
- Cardboard tube mailer with metal inner container for tube of Regan-Lowe charcoal medium
- Specimen transport bag
- Clinical Test Request Form (Micro 220)
- Collection Instructions (Micro 412)

Instructions

Storage: Store all Regan-Lowe agar media in the refrigerator at 2-8°C (36-46°F) until needed. **Note media and swab expiration dates.** Return expired kits to VDHL. Do not use outdated media or media that shows signs of degrading or contamination before the expiration date. Freeze the cold pack (e.g., Gel-Pak) until use. Save the insulated shipping containers for shipment of specimens back to VDHL.

Collection of Specimen: Collect the specimen as soon as possible after the onset of symptoms and before antibiotics are administered. The organism is most often recovered by culture during the catarrhal or early paroxysmal stages and is seldom recovered after the fourth week of illness. Antibiotics will usually prevent the recovery of *Bordetella* spp. by culture.

1. Warm medium to room temperature (30 minutes) before inoculation.
2. Print patient name and date of collection on the labeled tube.
3. Pass the swab through a nostril into the nasopharynx. The swab should induce a cough; leave the swab in during the cough, or for approximately 5-10 seconds.
4. Push the swab into the Regan-Lowe charcoal medium tube, leaving the swab in the tube. Break off the end of the swab shaft at the scored mark.
5. Tightly screw the cap onto the Regan-Lowe charcoal medium tube. Place it in the inner metal container and then into the cardboard mailer for transport.
6. Fill out the requisition form completely. Indicate whether the sample should be tested by culture (no fee for testing) or by PCR/Culture (fee for PCR testing only). All samples submitted for PCR testing will also be tested by culture.

All information is required to ensure accurate and efficient processing of the specimen and reporting of test results:

* Patient name, address and date of birth

* Date of collection

* Test(s) requested (culture only or PCR and culture)

* Specimen Type (Nasopharyngeal Swab)

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* Billing information (if applicable)

* Specimen Site (Nasopharynx)

* Medical provider name and address

7. Place the completed Test Request Form in the outside pocket of the specimen transport bag.
8. Place the tubed specimen cardboard mailer from step 5 into the resealable pouch of the specimen transport bag.
9. Refrigerate the specimen transport bag (containing specimen and Test Request Form) at 4°C until able to ship. Transport the specimen to the VDHL immediately, or as soon as possible. For specimens that are collected on Friday, continue to store at 4°C until Monday, and then ship the specimens to the laboratory immediately. For those with access to a hospital courier, specimen can be shipped on Friday for Saturday delivery to VDHL.

Shipment of Specimen:

1. **For optimal recovery and detection of *Bordetella* spp., specimen(s) should arrive at the laboratory within 1 day of collection. Specimen(s) received after 4 days from the date of collection will be rejected for testing by culture.**
2. Verify labeling and completeness of requisition form.
3. Specimens must be shipped cold. Pack specimens in insulated container with cold pack.
4. Ship by fastest means to the Laboratory; time in transit should not exceed 24 hours. For this reason, mail is not recommended.

THE LABORATORY WILL DECONTAMINATE AND DISCARD ANY SPECIMEN WHICH IS IMPROPERLY PACKAGED AND MAY PRESENT A RISK TO PERSONNEL.

The specimen may be rejected if:

- Date of specimen collection is missing on the specimen and form
- Patient name and/or date of birth is missing on the specimen and form
- Medical provider name /address is missing on the form
- Specimen Type (Nasopharyngeal Swab) and/or Specimen Site (Nasopharynx) is incorrect and/or missing on the form
- Transport medium or swab has expired
- Specimen was frozen or exposed to extreme temperature
- Specimen is received more than 4 days after collection
- Regan-Lowe transport medium is not used
- Samples submitted for PCR testing will be rejected if Copan Flocked or Dacron swabs are not used

If you have any comments or questions regarding these instructions, please call one of the telephone numbers listed on the front of this form. Thank you.