Nasopharyngeal Swab Technique

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Step-by-Step Instructions

☐ Gather the appropriate supplies.
  
  Please note: you may need to obtain the testing supplies from the Hospital Supervisor
  
  Personal protective equipment (PPE)
  
  Nasopharyngeal (NP) swab
  
  Appropriate transport media
  
  Facial tissue

☐ Explain the procedure to the patient and what they can expect to feel

☐ Gauge the approximate depth that you will have to insert the swab based on the patient’s anatomy

☐ Provide the patient with facial tissues and have them blow their nose to remove excess nasal secretions or mucus

☐ Ask the patient to tilt their head back

☐ Gently insert the swab along the nasal septum, just above the floor of the nasal passage to the nasopharynx until resistance is felt (Figure 1)

☐ Gently and slowly rotate the swab against the nasopharyngeal mucosa for 10-15 seconds

☐ Gently and slowly remove the swab

☐ Break the tip of the swab off into the appropriate transport container/medium

☐ Ensure the transport medium vial is labelled appropriately

☐ Send labeled specimen to the laboratory

Important Information

☐ When performing a nasopharyngeal swab for COVID-19 testing or screening, you must wear the appropriate PPE.

☐ Please follow the steps for appropriate donning and doffing of PPE to avoid self-contamination

☐ The NP swab must be a flexible, flocked viral swab. It is not appropriate to use a cotton-tipped wooden swab.

Additional Resources

☐ Standard Work: Nasopharyngeal Swab Technique

☐ PROTOCOL: Pre-Procedure COVID-19 Testing Protocol (PolicyTech Reference # 24776)

☐ Donning and Doffing Guidance