

# Guidance on COVID-19

## Guidance on Collection of a Deep Nasal / Mid-turbinate Swab for testing for COVID-19

V1.1 03.11.2020

Version	Date	Changes from previous version
1.1	03/11/2020	<p>Explicit statement that this is not an Aerosol Generating Procedure associated with an increased risk of infection</p> <p>Brief outline of required infection prevention and control precautions for sample collection</p> <p>Details on of those groups in whom a deep nasal/mid-turbinate sample may be considered as preferred or as an alternative to oropharyngeal/nasopharyngeal sample</p> <p>Explicit statement that deep nasal/mid-turbinate sample is often not appropriate for those requiring hospitalisation</p> <p>Inclusion of confirmation of consent to sample collection in the process</p> <p>Reference to a HSE video demonstrating the sample collection method and removal of link illustrating both deep nasal and nasopharyngeal sample collection</p>
1.0	14/09/2020	Published version 1

## Key Points

This guidance is issued as interim guidance to support collection of deep nasal /mid-turbinate swabs for testing for COVID-19. This document replaces the previous document issued on September 14 2020.

A deep nasal /mid turbinate swab is generally the appropriate sample when testing children aged over 3 months in the community for SARS-CoV-2, the virus associated with COVID-19. The sample collection is generally much less uncomfortable for children and performs well compared with nasopharyngeal sampling in comparative studies and in the experience of a number of paediatric hospitals using this approach. If circumstances arise in which testing of children under 3 months in the community for SARS-CoV-2 only (and not for other respiratory viruses) a deep nasal /mid turbinate swab is also appropriate.

A deep nasal/mid-turbinate swab should also be considered as an alternative to a nasopharyngeal sample or combined oropharyngeal/nasopharyngeal sample in adults where the previous collection of a nasopharyngeal sample or combined oropharyngeal/nasopharyngeal sample has caused considerable distress, or in a person in whom there is reason to expect that it will cause distress or in a person who declines consent for an oropharyngeal/nasopharyngeal sample.

In children and adults who require hospitalisation for suspected viral respiratory tract infection including COVID-19, a deep nasal/mid-turbinate sample is generally not appropriate. The sample collection guidance from the laboratory supporting the hospital in question should be followed.

Collection of a deep nasal/mid turbinate swab is not an Aerosol Generating Procedure associated with an increased risk of infection. Infection prevention and control precautions required by the person taking the sample are as for taking a nasopharyngeal sample. Key elements are: to minimise direct physical contact; to maintain distance when possible; to perform hand hygiene (before and after); and to use the following personal protective equipment – disposable gloves (remove and discard after each person), surgical mask, and plastic apron. For additional details, see HPSC Guidance on PPE <https://bit.ly/320dP8z> .

Please note that a deep nasal/mid-turbinate swab may not be suitable for testing for all other respiratory pathogens. If testing for additional respiratory pathogens other than SARS-CoV-2 is required or may be required as a follow on test, please check with the laboratory regarding suitable sample type.

The following series of steps is adapted from

[https://www.rch.org.au/clinicalguide/guideline\\_index/COVID-19\\_swabbing/](https://www.rch.org.au/clinicalguide/guideline_index/COVID-19_swabbing/)

Please note a HSE video demonstrating the sample collection technique is available at the following link <https://bit.ly/3efCPO2>

1. Ensure that the person or parent/guardian understands and agrees to collection of the sample
2. Ensure the person is in a comfortable position.
3. If the person is a small child ensure that they are in a secure position, preferably on a parent's lap - the parent should cross one arm across the child's body to hold the arms and place the other hand on the child's forehead.


4. Hold the swab with a pencil grip and insert horizontally (with child in sitting position) into one nostril parallel to the palate. Insert to the following depth or until resistance is met:
  - 1 cm if less than 2 years.
  - 1.5 cm if 2-6 years.
  - 2 cm if 6-12 years.
  - 2-3 cm if more than 12 years.
5. Rotate swab 5 times against the nasal wall. Follow same method for other nostril.
6. Remove swab and insert into transport medium or vial. Label vial with appropriate patient information.

The illustration below may be useful

**BILATERAL DEEP NASAL SWAB:**

- Using a pencil grip and while gently rotating the swab, insert the tip 2-3cm for adults and 1-2cm for children (or until resistance is met), into the nostril, parallel to the palate, to absorb mucoid secretion.
- Rotate the swab several times against the nasal wall.
- Withdraw the swab and repeat the process in the other nostril.

Note: Consideration must be given to the size of the swab being used to collect specimen from children and babies.



Source: Adapted from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <sup>3</sup>

ENDS