



# Public Health

## Idaho North Central District



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### *Physician's ALERT...*

March 17, 2020

#### **Changes in Testing for SARS-CoV-2 / COVID-19 at the Idaho Bureau of Laboratories: HEALTH ALERT**

The priority of the Idaho Bureau of Laboratories (IBL) is to maintain a 24-hour turnaround time for SARS-CoV-2 testing of hospitalized patients. To ensure this capability, beginning Tuesday March 17, IBL will accept specimens for testing for SARS-CoV-2 on:

1. **hospitalized patients**
2. specimens determined by local public health districts to be high priority for public health purposes

Specimens collected on outpatients other than in (2) above **must** be sent to commercial laboratories for testing. Only nasopharyngeal (NP) swab specimens will be tested at IBL. Specimens must be accompanied by a completed IBL clinical test request form found at <http://statelab.idaho.gov>. ([https://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Portals/0/Health/Labs/Clinical\\_Test\\_Request\\_Form.pdf](https://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Portals/0/Health/Labs/Clinical_Test_Request_Form.pdf)). Incomplete forms will delay processing of specimens and receipt of test results.

Some facilities are reporting difficulty obtaining viral transport media /universal transport media to collect and transport patient samples. Alternative transport media for the CDC 2019-nCoV Real-Time RT-PCR Diagnostic Panel used by IBL are described at <https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/emergency-situations-medical-devices/faqs-diagnostic-testing-sars-cov-2>. The most likely alternative for Idaho facilities is:

**Dry swab in saline.** Do NOT use calcium alginate swabs or swabs with wooden shafts.

- Supplies:
  - Puritan: 25-3317-H, 25-3316-U, 25-3316-H, 25-3317-U, 25-3318-U, 25-3318-H, 25-3319-H, 25-3320-U, 25-3320-U EMB 100MM, 25-3320-U EMB 80MM, 25-3320-H and 25-3320-H EMB 80MM
  - Copan: 501CS01, 503CS01, 516CS01, 518CS01 and 534CS01
- Storage: Up to 72 hours at 4°C, or frozen for longer storage.

Contact your commercial laboratory to learn what specimen collection and transport materials are acceptable for their SARS-CoV-2 assay.

Please do not call IBL to ask when results will be available or ask for results. IBL will call the ordering provider listed on the clinical test request form if the result is positive, and all results will be provided via normal channels. Please be sure after hours contact information is included on the form to avoid delay in communicating positive results and appropriate public health response. IBL is currently experiencing difficulty with reporting software and temporarily will be faxing all results to providers. Please be sure to include a secure fax line number on the clinical test request form.

Currently, any patient with a positive test result for SARS-CoV-2 will be contacted by local public health and advised on monitoring and movement restrictions after they have been notified by the provider of their result; however, this is a rapidly evolving situation and this could change as needed to focus public health resources on protecting the most vulnerable populations.

Testing is not recommended in people who have no symptoms.