

Ministry of health

Infection control directorate



**Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations
during diagnostic respiratory specimen collection**

- Individuals in the room during the procedure should be limited to the patient and the healthcare worker (HCW) obtaining the specimen.
- HCW collecting specimens for testing for SARS-CoV-2 from patients with known or suspected COVID-19 should adhere to Standard, Contact, and Droplet Precautions, including the use of eye protection.
- These procedures should take place in:
 - an AIIR or in an examination room with the door closed.
 - ideally, the patient should not be placed in any room where room exhaust is recirculated within the building without HEPA filtration.
- Provide medical mask for patients with respiratory symptoms.
- Collection of diagnostic respiratory specimens (e.g., nasopharyngeal swab) are likely to induce coughing or sneezing, HCWs shall put on:
 - **Gloves**
 - Perform hand hygiene, then put on clean, non-sterile gloves. Change gloves if they become torn or heavily contaminated. Remove and discard gloves and immediately perform hand hygiene.
 - Change gloves between patients sampling.
 - **Gowns**
 - Put on a clean isolation gown. Change the gown if it becomes soiled. Remove and discard the gown in a dedicated container for waste or linen before leaving the patient room or care area. Disposable gowns should be discarded after use.

• **Respiratory Protection**

- Use a respirator as a fit-tested NIOSH-certified disposable N95.
- Disposable respirators should be removed and discarded after exiting the care area. Perform hand hygiene after discarding the respirator.

• **Eye Protection**

- Put on eye protection (e.g., goggles, a disposable face shield covers front and sides of the face).
- Reusable eye protection (e.g., goggles) must be cleaned and disinfected according to manufacturer's reprocessing instructions. Disposable eye protection should be discarded after use.
- Between patients sampling, change gloves.
- Clean and disinfect room surfaces promptly by trained staff with the use of the full PPE.
- 2-step cleaning and disinfection: Clean with neutral detergent, then disinfect with a chlorine-based disinfectant in the form of a solution at a strength of 5,000 ppm available chlorine.
- Use 70% Ethyl alcohol to disinfect reusable dedicated equipment (e.g., thermometers) between uses.
- All specimens collected for laboratory investigations should be regarded as potentially infectious
- Ensure that all personnel who transport specimens are trained in safe handling practices and spill decontamination procedures;
- Place specimens for transport in leak-proof specimen bags (i.e., secondary containers) that have a separate sealable pocket for the specimen (i.e., a plastic biohazard specimen bag), with the patient's label on the specimen container (i.e., the primary container), and a clearly written laboratory request form;
- Deliver all specimens by hand whenever possible. DO NOT use pneumatic-tube systems to transport specimens.