



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY

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www.sloPublicHealth.org/Lab

SPECIMEN COLLECTION & TRANSPORT INSTRUCTIONS

Poxvirus PCR Testing (including Monkeypox)

Note: If a specimen tests positive for non-variola orthopoxvirus DNA, a duplicate specimen will be referred to the CDC for confirmatory monkeypox testing. The CDC requires that a case ID be obtained prior to referral. To obtain a case ID, the following information is needed by the laboratory:

1. Clinical and epidemiologic criteria for testing (e.g., presence of characteristic rash, contact to a known case, etc.)

SPECIMEN COLLECTION

1. Do not clean the lesion before sample collection. Also, do not apply a numbing cream or topical agent prior to swabbing as this may interfere with testing results.
2. Sample the skin lesions with a dry swab using a sterile nylon, polyester, or Dacron swab with a plastic or thin aluminum shaft. Do not use other types of swabs. Place swab in a sterile container and refrigerate within an hour of collection.
3. More than one lesion should be sampled, preferably 2 to 3 total lesions if present on different body sites. A lesion should be sampled with two separate swabs (second swab is confirmatory testing).
 - a. **Vigorously** swab or brush each lesion with two separate sterile dry swabs.
 - b. Break off swabs and place each into separate sterile tubes or containers.
 - c. Sample, label and store each lesion separately. **Do not place in VTM or UTM.** Swabs must remain dry.
 - d. Label the specimen with the patient's full name, date of collection, and specimen source.
 - e. Fill out the San Luis Obispo Public Health Laboratory Requisition completely.
 - f. Indicate on requisition that you are requesting **Poxvirus testing**.
 - g. Include patient's vaccination history [date of smallpox (vaccinia) vaccination], clinical findings and symptoms (date of rash onset), and travel or exposure history on the requisition.
4. **Note: If testing is needed for other viral causes of rash, separate collection is required.**

Preferred specimen types by virus are as follows:

- a. Varicella-Zoster Virus and Herpes Simplex Viruses: Swab specimens from cutaneous and mucocutaneous lesions in viral transport media (VTM) or universal transport medium (UTM).
- b. Enterovirus: Nasopharyngeal swab in VTM.

SPECIMEN STORAGE & TRANSPORT

- Refrigerate (2–8°C) dry swabs within an hour of collection. Transport at refrigerated temperature (wet ice) within 7 days. If specimens are to be held longer than 7 days, freeze (-20°C or lower) within an hour of collection and ship on dry ice.
- Clinical specimens should be shipped in Category B packaging.
- Deliver to: San Luis Obispo Public Health Laboratory, 2191 Johnson Ave, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401.

REJECTION CRITERIA

- Incomplete specimen labeling/documentation
- Improperly stored specimens or specimen tubes/containers not sealed properly
- Swabs/scabs placed in viral or universal transport media
- Holding time greater than 7 days at refrigerated temperature