

Arkansas Department of Health Public Health Laboratory
201 South Monroe Street, Little Rock, AR 72205



Guidance for COVID-19 Specimen Submission to the Public Health Laboratory

Prior Authorization: Facilities wishing to submit COVID-19 specimens for testing **must** have prior authorization before submitting COVID-19 specimens for testing at the Arkansas Public Health Lab (APHL).

Email ADH.HAI@arkansas.gov or call **501-280-4368** for prior authorization and COVID-19 collection kit information.

Specimen Collection: Collect **one Anterior Nasal or Nasopharyngeal swab** per most current [CDC Guidance](#) and place the swab in a single vial with 2-3 ml of Viral/Universal Transport Media (VTM/UTM), 1-3mL of Normal Saline, 1-3mL of Liquid Amies Transport Media, or 1-3mL of Molecular Transport Media (MTM).

- Swab Requirements:
 - **Use only sterile synthetic fiber swabs with plastic shafts.**
 - Do not use calcium alginate swabs or swabs with wooden shafts
 - Do not use foam tipped swabs or swabs placed in culture media
 - Place the swab immediately into sterile collection kit.
 - **Label the specimen with two unique identifiers**, such as the patient's **full name and date of birth.**
 - **If your specimen is not properly labeled, it may be rejected.**
- Transport Requirements:
 - Refrigerate specimen at 2-8°C and ship cold with cold packs.
 - **Warm specimens will be rejected.**

Test Request Forms: Complete a **COVID-19 Test Request Form** or use the **Lab Web Portal** to generate a test request (Create a Lab Web Portal account to view your facility's COVID-19 results by selecting *New User Registration* on the [Lab Web Portal](#) website).

- COVID-19 Test Request Form: *Complete all fields*
 - Must have the submitting facility's name and **correct phone & fax number for results**

- Requestor must be a licensed medical practitioner (i.e. physician, physician’s assistant, nurse practitioner, etc.)
- Ensure the **Patient Name** and **Date of Birth** on COVID-19 Test Request Form are **correct** and **match the specimen tube**.
- Place COVID-19 Test Request in the outer pocket of the specimen bag. Do not place the paperwork inside the bag with the specimen.

Local Health Units: continue to use Common Customer to request COVID-19.

Specimen Shipping: Ship **cold** as **Category B** (UN 3373) to the AR-PHL. Write **ATTN: Molecular** on the outside of the box containing COVID-19 specimens.

Arkansas Dept. of Health-Public Health Laboratory ATTN: Molecular
201 South Monroe Street, Little Rock, AR 72205

OR

Package as a Category B specimen and bring to the nearest county Local Health Unit (LHU) for shipment. **LHUs cannot accept unpackaged specimens.**

OR

Specimens can be dropped off at the APHL Specimen Receiving located at the back of the building (off of Palm Street).



Turnaround Time: maximum of 7 business days. Due to 72-hour testing window, it

is recommended that specimens be brought to the APHL as soon as possible after collection.

Reports:

- SARS-CoV-2 finalized reports will be faxed to the submitter or are accessible via your facility's Lab Web Portal in real time.

Local Health Unit reports will electronically attach to patients' EHR.

APHL: 501-661-2220 (General, Quality Assurance, & Lab Web Portal Questions)

HAI Team: 501-280-4368 (COVID-19 Testing Prior-Approval)