

Laboratory Collection Instructions for Pertussis Testing

Specimens:

- Optimal samples are pernasal swabs but postnasal swabs are also accepted, though less sensitive. **DO NOT SUBMIT THROAT SWABS.**
- Only Dacron tipped swabs with aluminum wire shafts should be used. COPAN swabs below are ideal.



COPAN 125C Amies Charcoal (soft aluminum wire, green tip)

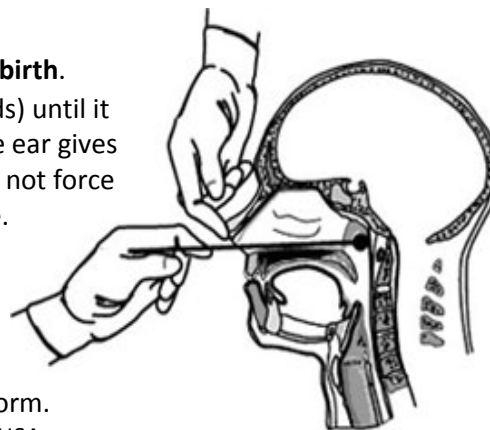
Collection:

- Collect specimens from patients presenting with cough within **72 hours of onset** of symptoms.
- **Personal protection during specimen collection:** Minimize self exposure by minimizing the amount of time spent in taking a sample, wearing personal protection and following infection control practices. Hands should be washed and fresh gloves used for each new patient.

Procedure:

1st Choice: Pernasal specimens

1. **Label** the container with the patient's **full name** and **date of birth**.
2. Gently insert swab into one nostril **straight back** (not upwards) until it reaches the posterior wall. The distance from the nose to the ear gives an estimate of how far back the swab should be inserted. Do not force the swab. If an obstruction is encountered, try the other side.
3. Rotate swab a few times, loosening the cells in the mucus cavity and then remove.
4. Place the swab into the accompanying vial of Amies transport media.
5. Fill out the *PHSA Labs Bacteriology & Mycology Requisition* form. (Available at <http://www.phsa.ca/AgenciesAndServices/Services/PHSA-Labs/Testing-Requisitions/Diagnostic.htm>)
6. Seal in biohazard bag, refrigerate and ship as soon as possible in a cooler containing ice packs.



2nd Choice: Postnasal specimens

1. **Label** the container with the patient's **full name** and **date of birth**.
2. Incline the patient's head as required and insert the swab into the patient's mouth.
3. To avoid contamination from the oral cavity, bend the wire to an angle of 135° about 1 cm from the tip.
4. Rest the swab against the posterior wall of the pharynx and move the tip up and down a few times.
5. Place the swab into the accompanying vial of Amies transport media.
6. Fill out the *PHSA Labs Bacteriology & Mycology Requisition* form.
7. Seal in biohazard bag, refrigerate and ship as soon as possible in a cooler containing ice packs.