General Information
Testing for COVID-19 can be conducted by the State Hygienic Laboratory. All testing should be approved by IDPH in conjunction with the CDC before collecting specimens. If your facility suspects a potential case, please contact IDPH epidemiologists at 1-800-362-2736 during business hours or 515-323-4360 after hours (ask State Patrol to page the epi on call). Epidemiology staff will assist with completing test request forms and required documentation.

Safety Note
Utilize standard precautions when processing clinical samples from potentially infectious patients. Sample processing should be performed in at least a Class II biological safety cabinet following a minimum of biosafety level 2 guidelines. Laboratory workers should wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) which includes disposable gloves, laboratory coat/gown and eye protection when handling potentially infectious specimens.

Timing of Specimen Collection
Specimens should be collected as soon as possible after onset of illness, preferably within the first 3-4 days.

Specimen Type
Nasopharyngeal (NP) swab AND oropharyngeal (OP) swab specimens should be submitted on all persons under investigation (PUI). Sputum samples are requested for PUIs with productive cough. Do not induce sputum collection.

Specimen Collection and Storage
Swab specimens should be collected using only swabs with a synthetic tip (e.g., polyester, Dacron®) and an aluminum or plastic shaft. Each swab should be placed into a separate viral transport medium tube. Each patient to be tested should have a minimum of 2 samples (One NP swab and one OP swab in separate containers). Examples of acceptable transport medium are shown. Refrigerate all specimens promptly after collection.

Specimen Labeling and Documentation
All specimens must be labeled with 2 patient identifiers such as name, date of birth, or unique facility identifier and must match the information on the test request form.

Specimen Delivery
SHL utilizes Central Delivery Service of Iowa for courier service. Access http://www.cdsofiowa.com/ to arrange a pick-up. Pickup requests should be entered by 11:00 AM to ensure the courier delivery to SHL. Place each sample into a biohazard bag with absorbent material and place completed test request form in the outer envelope. Identify the sample as a refrigerated specimen so that the courier will keep the specimens cold during transport.

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