



<b>Document #:</b> <b>CO-1</b>		<b>Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for: Protocol Swabbing (Adult &amp; Pediatric)</b>	Status: v.3 Revised: Nov. 25, 2020 Note: latest updates will appear in blue
<b>For COVID-19</b>			Page 1 of 4

## The Process:

Step	Instructions
Before You Start	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assemble all supplies such as PPE, transport medium, and flocked swab.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Age 12 months – 8 years use the shorter swab (Copan FLOQ swab, HGT038) if available</li> <li>Age &gt; 8 years and adults use the longer swab (Copan FLOQ, H268D) if available                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where the smaller size is not available, a larger swab may be used but due to the size there will be increased discomfort</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>Prior to any sampling, the collector should perform hand hygiene and don personal protective equipment including gown, gloves, eye shield and surgical or procedure mask</li> </ul>

Step	Instructions
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain the procedure to patient and/or parent/legal guardian</li> <li>Obtain consent to perform the swab from the patient or parent/legal guardian (<a href="#">Refer to Pediatric Guidance</a>)</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have the patient blow their nose or remove any mucous with a tissue or cotton tipped swab</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have the patient tilt their head back slightly encourage them to close their eyes</li> </ul> <p><b>Refer to Appendix A: Pediatric Considerations for Nasopharyngeal Swab Collection</b> for pediatric techniques</p>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measure the distance from the corner of the nose to the front of the ear.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insert ONLY half this length, approximately 4 cm in young children and 7 cm in older children or adults</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insert the swab along the nasal septum at a slightly downward angle, following parallel to the palate until resistance is felt against the posterior nasopharynx.</li> </ul> <p><b>Caution!</b> Use caution related to pre-breaking with an increased risk for dislodgement in patient</p>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rotate the swab in this spot for <a href="#">several seconds, not to exceed 10-15 seconds</a></li> </ul>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove the swab, cut, and place in sample container ensuring the lid is securely closed</li> </ul>
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove PPE per protocol</li> </ul>

## Protocol Algorithm for Swabbing – 7 Steps

### Before you Start!

Assemble all supplies such as PPE, transport medium, and flocked swab  
Prior to any sampling, the collector should perform hand hygiene and don personal protective equipment including gown, gloves, eye shield and surgical or procedure mask

**Step 1:**  
Have the patient  
blow their nose or  
remove any mucous  
with a tissue or  
cotton tipped swab

**Step 2:**  
Measure the distance from  
the corner of the nose to the  
front of the ear, and insert  
the shaft **ONLY half this**  
**length**

**Step 3:**  
Have the patient tilt  
their head back slightly  
and close their eyes

**Caution!**  
Insertion of  
approximately 4 cm in  
young children and 7 cm  
in adults

**Step 4:**  
Insert the swab along the  
nasal septum at a slightly  
downward angle,  
following parallel to the  
palate until resistance is  
felt against the posterior  
nasopharynx

**Step 5:**  
Rotate the swab in this  
spot for 10-15 seconds

**Step 6:**  
Remove the swab, cut,  
and place in viral  
medium container,  
ensuring the lid is  
securely closed

**Step 7:**  
Remove PPE per protocol

## Appendix A: Pediatric Considerations for Nasopharyngeal Swab Collection

- Take the time to put the child at ease prior to specimen collection. Approach in a calm and friendly manner and explain the procedure in a simple way

Example:

“We are going to put this little swab in your nose, it’s going to tickle a lot and be over really quickly!”

“It may feel like getting water up or nose or like when you drink a really fizzy drink.”

“It may feel like you have to sneeze for a while after.”

“By the time you count to 10 slowly, it will all be over.”

“An adult may help you stay still.”

- Involving the parents in the patient’s care is one of our best tools for cooperation. Getting the parents to assist with holds can help make them feel more in control of the situation which allows the child to feel more comfortable.

### For Younger Children

- Younger children may sit on their parent/legal guardian’s lap or in a car seat. Have the adult help tilt the patient’s head back with one arm and to hold the patient still with the other arm.
  - The first and best hold to use is the **Two Person Hold** for nasal swabs, depicted below.
  - In this hold, the parent is able to provide a hug hold, and the patient’s arms and head are controlled



**Two Person Hold for  
Nasal Swabs**

*Photo courtesy of Marshfield Children’s Hospital*

- The second option is **Bundling**
- While we do not recommend “bundling” children as it can make them feel vulnerable, there are times when a modified or half bundle is appropriate (e.g. older and stronger uncooperative children). Gowns should be available and can be used.

### For Primary School Age Children

- Primary School age children may lean back in the seat and tilt their head back with chin out. If needed parent/guardian may sit beside the child, helping to hold their head

**Table 1: Age Appropriate Comfort Methods**

<u>Age-Appropriate Comfort Methods</u>	Cuddle	Rubbing or Patting	Soother or Breast feeding	Music or Distraction	Hand Holding or Squeezing	Age Appropriate Play	Band-aids or Artwork or Stickers	Problem Solving	Self Talk or Relaxation Exercises
Baby	x	x	x	x	x				
Toddler	x	x		x	x	x			
Pre-School Age	x			x	x	x	x		x
School Age	x			x	x	x	x	x	x
Adolescents				x	x	x		x	x