

<b>Section:</b> UTMB On-line Documentation	<b>01.23 - Policy</b>
<b>Subject:</b> Infection Control & Healthcare Epidemiology Policies and Procedures	
<b>Topic:</b> 01.23 – Collecting and Handling of Laboratory Specimens in Patients with Confirmed or Suspected Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)	<b>2021 - Author</b>

## **01.23 – Collecting and Handling of Laboratory Specimens in Patients with Confirmed or Suspected Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)**

<b>Purpose</b>	To facilitate safe transport of laboratory specimens obtained from persons with confirmed or suspected coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).
<b>Audience</b>	All employees of UTMB hospitals, clinics, outpatient surgical centers, contract workers, licensed independent practitioners, and students who obtain body fluid specimens.
<b>Policy</b>	Any collection and handling of specimens obtained from patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 should follow standard precautions.
<b>A. Specimen Collection</b>	<p>Dedicated medical equipment should be used when caring for patients with suspected or confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection.</p> <p>All non-dedicated, non-disposable medical equipment used for patient care should be cleaned and disinfected according to manufacturer’s instructions and facility policies.</p> <p>Ensure that environmental cleaning and disinfection procedures are followed consistently and correctly.</p> <p>Routine cleaning and disinfection procedures are appropriate for SARS-CoV-2 in healthcare settings, including those patient-care areas in which aerosol generating procedures are performed.</p> <p>Hand hygiene with an alcohol-based sanitizer of at least a 60% alcohol or hand washing should always be performed before and after collection of samples.</p>
<b>Direct</b>	For healthcare providers collecting specimens or working within 6 feet of patients suspected to be infected with SARS-CoV-2, maintain proper infection control and use recommended personal protective equipment (PPE), which includes an N95 or higher-level respirator (or facemask if a respirator is not available), eye protection, gloves, and a gown.
<b>Indirect</b>	For healthcare providers who are handling specimens, but are not directly involved in collection (e.g. handling self-collected specimens) and not working within 6 feet of the patient, follow Standard Precautions. Healthcare providers should wear a form of source control (face mask) at

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all times while in the healthcare facility.

## **B. Specimen Handling**

Single bagging of collected specimens is adequate.

Decontaminate work surfaces and equipment with an appropriate EPA-approved disinfectant for use against SARS-CoV-2.

Hand hygiene should always be performed after manipulating and transport of samples.

### **References:**

1. Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. February 23, 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html>.
2. Interim Guidelines for Collecting and Handling of Clinical Specimens for COVID-19 Testing. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. February 26, 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/lab/guidelines-clinical-specimens.html>.
3. Interim Laboratory Biosafety Guidelines for Handling and Processing Specimens Associated with Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. June 11, 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/lab/lab-biosafety-guidelines.html#specimen-packing-shipping>.