



DALLAS COUNTY
Department of Health and Human Services
Laboratory Division

Author: Luke C. Short, Ph.D., HCLD (ABB) | Laboratory Director
To: DCHHS Laboratory Submitters
Date: June 10th, 2022
Subject: DCHHS Laboratory Requirements for Specimen Submittal for Monkeypox Virus Testing

To Whom It May Concern,

Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHS) is actively monitoring the monkeypox situation and advises all clinicians to review the [Center for Disease Control \(CDC\) Health Alert Network \(HAN\)](#) to be aware of the signs and symptoms related to monkeypox even if a patient does not have a recent history of travel outside of the United States. Clinicians should be aware that some cases could be presenting atypically with a rash in the genital area with or without prodrome.

In an effort to ensure the Laboratory continues to provide high quality laboratory testing services, effective **immediately** the DCHHS Public Health Laboratory will begin the enforcement of the following specimen collection and submission requirements. As a result, any specimens submitted for Monkeypox virus testing that are received and do not meet the required criteria listed below will be rejected.

The DCHHS Laboratory understands the challenges associated with meeting these requirements and appreciates everyone's compliance in meeting the requirement. If there are any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to reach out to the Laboratory.

1. Collect multiple specimens for preliminary and confirmatory testing as follows:
 - a. Note: **Only dry swabs are acceptable**
 - b. More than one lesion should be sampled, preferably from different locations on the body and/or from lesions with differing appearances.
 - c. Vigorously swab or brush lesion with two separate **sterile dry polyester or Dacron swabs (NO cotton swabs)**. If possible, unroof an intact pustule, insert the swab in the fluid and scrape the bottom of the lesion.
 - d. Do not submit NP swabs.
 - e. If you do not have the proper swabs please contact the Laboratory for assistance.
2. Place each swab into a separate dry sterile container, the end of the swab can be broken off if needed to fit into tube. (Recommended: 15mL conical tube). **Do not add or store in viral or universal transport media.**
3. The order requisition form must include both the date and time of collection.
4. All samples from presumptive patients should be collected in an emergency room facility.
5. Submitting clients are responsible to ensure delivery of specimen to the DCHHS laboratory.
6. The specimen tube must include the following information:
 - a. Patient Name (Full)
 - b. Date of Birth



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- c. Collection Date and Time
- d. Collection Site (i.e. face, neck, etc.)
7. Refrigerate (2 °C to 8 °C) or freeze (-20 °C or lower) specimens within an hour after collection. Store refrigerated specimens for up to 7 days and frozen specimens for up to 60 days from time of collection.
8. Send refrigerated specimens within 7 days of collection as a **Category B agent using cold packs** and delivered to the laboratory at 2 °C to 8 °C. **Specimens that are greater than 8 °C upon receipt will be rejected.**
9. Ship frozen specimens within 60 days of collection as a Category B agent using dry ice. Specimens that are not frozen upon receipt will be rejected.
10. Ship all samples to the Dallas County LRN at the following address:
 - a. **2377 N Stemmons Fwy, Basement, Dallas, TX 75207** on ice packs or dry ice.
11. Specimens not meeting the listed submission requirements will be subject to automatic rejection.
12. The Dallas County Laboratory Response Network (LRN) will test samples to identify the presence of DNA consistent with an *Orthopoxvirus* using Non-Variola *Orthopoxvirus* real-time polymerase chain reaction (PCR) as a rule out. This group of viruses includes monkeypox virus (the causative agent of monkeypox).
13. Positive samples will be shipped to the CDC by the Dallas County LRN for PCR (Strain Identification) testing and viral culturing.
14. The Dallas County LRN will use the following testing schedule:
 - a. Samples will be submitted Monday through Friday from 8 P.M. to 5 P.M.
 - b. Sample cut off for same day testing is 12:00 P.M., any sample submitted after 12:00 P.M. will be processed next business day.
 - c. Once samples are received and processed, turnaround time is 48 hours
 - d. No weekend testing will be conducted unless deemed necessary in the event of an emergency involving patient hospitalization.

Please refer to the Quick Help Guide on the next page for a summary table on specimen requirements.

Sincerely,

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Table 1: Quick Help Guide for Monkeypox Virus Testing Requirements

Specimen Type	Description	Collection	Storage	Transport/Shipping
<p>Dry Swab</p>	<p>Dry Swab collections of each lesion.</p> <p>More than one lesion should be sampled, preferably from different locations on the body and/or from lesions with differing appearances.</p> <p>Provide two (2) separate swabs for each sampled lesion in separate (individual) sterile containers (without liquid or transport media).</p> <p>**Please note PHL will only accept dry swabs. DO NOT provide swabs in liquid and/or transport medium</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using a sterile swab, scrub the base of the lesion vigorously enough to ensure that cells from the lesion are collected. Use only a sterile nylon, polyester or Dacron swab (<i>i.e.</i>, Eswab™). Do not submit NP swabs. Place each swab in its own sterile container (<i>i.e.</i>, conical tube (15 or 50 mL conical tube or urine cup). Each sampled lesion should have its own test requisition. Each specimen container and test requisition must be labeled with: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> patient first and last name and date of birth and Collection Date and Time the lesion collection site (<i>i.e.</i>, face, neck, left hand, <i>etc.</i>). 	<p>Refrigerate (2-8 °C) or freeze (-20 °C or lower) specimens within an hour of collection.</p> <p>If Refrigerated: Specimens can be stored at 2-8 °C for up to 7 days from collection.</p> <p>If Frozen: Specimens can be stored at -20 °C or below for up to 60 days from collection</p>	<p>Submitter is responsible for sending specimens using Category B packaging/shipping guidelines (see below).</p> <p>Ship specimen to: 2377 N Stemmons Fwy, Basement, Dallas, TX 75207</p> <p>Triple pack the specimens using the following procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place item in a leakproof primary receptacle (<i>i.e.</i>, sealed biohazard bag); multiple primary receptacles should be individually wrapped. Subsequently, place items in a leakproof secondary receptacle (<i>i.e.</i>, sealed biohazard bag). Finally, place items in rigid or strong outer packaging. Place a list of contents and paperwork (LabOnline or paper test requisition form) between the secondary receptacle and outer packaging. Specimens must be kept cold with ice packs, or dry ice if frozen. Label outer package with: Shipper and consignee identification (name, address, and telephone)