



Nasopharyngeal Swab Guide

Kits are identified as **UTM kit for Virus, Chlamydia, Mycoplasma and Ureaplasma** and contain a nasopharyngeal swab and Universal Transport Medium.

Collection of a nasopharyngeal swab

1. Assemble all supplies: gloves, mask, eye protection and collection kit
2. Check expiry date of transport medium
3. Wash hands with soap and water or use alcohol hand rub
4. Put on gloves, mask and eye protection
5. Have the patient sit in a chair or lie on a bed – elevate the head of the bed so that their head can be tilted back
6. Remove any mucous from the patient's nose, with a tissue or cotton tipped swab
7. Tilt the patient's head back slightly to straighten the passage from the front of the nose to the nasopharynx to make insertion of the swab easier
8. **Gently** insert the swab along the medial part of the septum, along the base of the nose, until it reaches the posterior nares – gentle rotation of the swab may be helpful. (If resistance is encountered on one side, try the other nostril, as the patient may have a deviated septum)
9. Rotate the swab several times to dislodge the columnar epithelial cells, and then remove the swab.
10. Put the NP swab into the transport medium and break it at the score mark on the shaft so that it does not protrude above the rim of the container. Failure to do so will result in the transport medium leaking and the **sample being discarded**.
11. **Ensure that the lid of the container is screwed on tight.**
12. Remove and discard gloves. Wash hands with soap and water or use alcohol hand rub
13. Remove and discard face mask, and repeat hand hygiene if hands become contaminated

* **Note** – insertion of the swab usually induces a cough

How deep is the NP swab inserted into the nasopharynx?

Measure the distance from the corner of the nose to the front of the ear and insert the shaft **ONLY** half this length. In adults, this distance is usually about 4 cm, (finest thickness of this swab shaft). In children this distance is less.

There is a deep score mark (∇) on the thick part of the shaft where it can be snapped to fit into the transport medium container.

