



Guidance for Measles Specimen Collection, Shipping, and Testing



Recommended Diagnostic Testing for Measles Virus

- ✓ Healthcare providers should collect a throat or nasopharyngeal swab for molecular identification and serum for serology at first contact with the patient.
- ✓ **Healthcare providers considering testing for measles must contact the Alabama Department of Public Health Immunization Division for consultation and approval prior to specimen submission at 1-800-469-4599 or [Measles Consultation Form for Testing](#).**

Specimen Collection & Storage

- ✓ To submit approved specimens for measles testing, follow the instructions below for proper collection:
 - Collect throat or nasopharyngeal swab and place in viral transport medium.
 - Collect blood specimen in a tiger or gold top (serum separator) tube, centrifuge, and extract serum and place in a sterile tube. Approximately 1-2 mL of serum is needed for measles serologic testing.
 - Specimens should be kept refrigerated (2 – 8°C) until ready to be shipped. Do not freeze.

Specimen Shipping

- ✓ The swab and serum specimens can be shipped together.
 - ✓ For providers who are not Bureau of Clinical Laboratories (BCL) Webportal users, complete one [BCL Requisition Form](#) for each specimen (one for serum and one for the swab) and submit with the specimens to the BCL.
 - Select “Other Test” and write in “Measles”.
 - Include specimen collection date, date of symptom onset, as well as dates and locations of recent travel, and relevant vaccine history.
 - ✓ For BCL Webportal users, order “Reference Microbiology” and enter “Measles” in the special comments field.
 - Submit a separate request for each specimen.
 - Complete the information under the Auxiliary tab.
 - ✓ Place the specimens in an insulated container with **frozen** ice packs for shipping or transportation.
 - ✓ IMM field staff will contact the provider to arrange specimen pick up to the BCL (**at no cost**).
- OR**
- ✓ Ship specimens (**at your expense**) directly to the BCL at:
8140 AUM Drive
Montgomery, AL 36117
 - ✓ Call the BCL at 334-260-3400 or email clab@adph.state.al.us with questions about specimen collection and shipping/transportation.

Resources

- ✓ <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/lab-tools/rt-pcr.html>