SPECIMEN COLLECTION AND STORAGE:

- Health care providers should exercise standard, contact and airborne precautions, including the use of eye protection during the collection of specimens. For details see: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control.html
- For initial diagnostic testing, collect upper respiratory specimens. For patients with a productive cough, you may also collect a lower respiratory sample.
- Include patient’s name and date of birth on the collection container.

I. Upper respiratory tract options

a. Nasopharyngeal (NP) swab - Use synthetic fiber swabs with plastic shafts. Place the inoculated swab immediately into a tube containing viral transport medium. **OR**

b. Oropharyngeal swab - Use synthetic fiber swabs with plastic shafts. Place the inoculated swab immediately into a tube containing viral transport medium. **OR**

c. NP wash/aspirate or nasal aspirate - Collect 2-3 mL into a sterile, dry, leak-proof, screw-cap container. **OR**

d. Nasal mid-turbinate/deep nasal swab - Use a flocked tapered swab. Place the inoculated swab immediately into a tube containing viral transport medium. **OR**

e. Anterior nares specimen - Use 1 flocked or spun polyester swab to sample both nares with same swab. Place the inoculated swab immediately into a single tube containing viral transport medium.

II. Lower respiratory tract options

a. Sputum- Collect 2 mL of sputum directly into a sterile, dry, leak-proof, screw-cap container. **OR**

b. Bronchoalveolar lavage or tracheal aspirate - Collect 2-3 mL into a sterile, dry, leak-proof, screw-cap container.

- Storage - Refrigerate specimen at 2-8°C if unable to transport immediately. Specimen needs to reach the BCL, with a frozen ice pack, within 72 hours of collection.

SHIPPING:

- Complete 1 requisition form for each specimen. The BCL Requisition Form is found on BCL’s opening page or at alabamapublichealth.gov/bcl/assets/bcl_requisiton_form.pdf.
  - Mark “Other Test” and write “COVID 19.”
  - Include specimen collection date, date of symptoms onset, as well as dates and locations of recent travel.
- If you have a Web Portal account, choose the appropriate matrix (specimen source), then order “COVID19” as the test. Select “Additional Information” and complete all required fields.
- Specimens should be packaged as Category B in an insulated shipping container with frozen ice packs.
- The packaged specimens may be taken to your local county health department to be couriered to the BCL (at no cost). Contact your local county health department to coordinate courier pick up time. **OR**
- Ship or drive specimens directly to the BCL-EID located at 8140 AUM Drive, Montgomery, AL 36117.

QUESTIONS:

If you have questions about specimen collection and shipping, call the Emerging Infectious Diseases Section (334-260-3400) at the BCL or email clab@adph.state.al.us.