

# COVID-19 specimen collection guidelines

Quest specimen requirements and acceptable supplies for SARS Coronavirus w/CoV 2 RNA, Qualitative Real-Time RT-PCR (test code 39444) and SARS-CoV-2 RNA, Qualitative Real-Time RT-PCR (test code 39433)

Quest does not manufacture the collection supplies used in testing. Due to extraordinary demand we are temporarily unable to accept orders for upper respiratory specimen collection and transport supplies. You do not have to use supplies from Quest to send us samples for testing. Please refer to the information below and to the Quest Test Directory at [TestDirectory.QuestDiagnostics.com](http://TestDirectory.QuestDiagnostics.com) for a list of acceptable specimen collection and transport supplies for COVID-19 testing.

These tests are being offered under an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) by the FDA. The EUA stipulates the tests may be used only by Quest laboratories and only for the detection of nucleic acid from SARS CoV-2, not for any other viruses or pathogens. The authorization is valid only for the duration of the declaration that circumstances exist justifying the EUA for *in vitro* diagnostic tests for the detection and/or diagnosis of COVID-19 under Section 564(b)(1) of the Act 21, U.S.C. § 360bbb-3(b)(1), unless the authorization is terminated or revoked sooner.

**This guide is intended to describe the collection devices to be used for nasopharyngeal (NP) and/or oropharyngeal (OP) swabs only.**

### General comments:

- Use only sterile Dacron® or rayon swabs with plastic shafts.
- Flocked swabs are preferred.
- Note the stem/shaft must be flexible and long enough to collect the NP sample. Wired shaft swabs are acceptable.
- Do not use calcium alginate swabs; swabs with wooden shafts; or swabs in bacterial culturette-type liquid or gel transports (see illustration on page 6 below), as they may contain substances that inhibit PCR testing.
- Saline has been indicated by the FDA in their FAQs as an acceptable transport media that can be used in situations where commercial viral transport media is unavailable for molecular RT-PCR SARS-CoV-2 assays (such as those in use for the Quest LDT and Roche tests).  
*Note: The FDA believes that for saline, a sterile glass or plastic vial containing between 1 mL and 3 mL of phosphate buffered saline is appropriate. The FDA believes that sample collection with a flocked swab is preferred. When options are limited, collection by a foam swab or spun synthetic swab is also acceptable, but may not be sufficient to rule out infection. Collection should be conducted with a sterile swab.*



**Viral transport media:** 1 mL or 3 mL vials are acceptable.

**Quest SARS-CoV-2 RNA, Qualitative Real-Time RT-PCR (test code 39433) storage/transport:** The preferred method of transport is a frozen specimen (packaged with dry ice). However, specimens can be transported refrigerated (2 °C-8 °C) and are stable at this temperature for up to 72 hours.

**Quest SARS Coronavirus CoV 2 RNA, Qualitative Real-Time RT-PCR (test code 39444) storage/transport:** Specimens can be transported at room temperature, or refrigerated (2 °C-25 °C) and are stable for up to 48 hours.

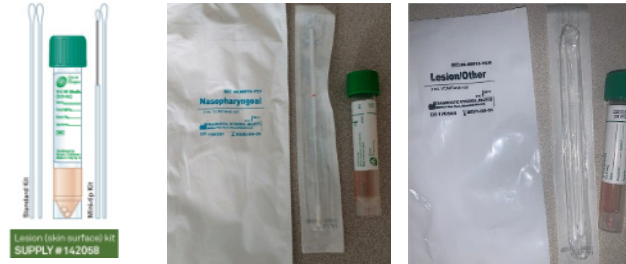
Specimens should be transported to your local Quest Diagnostics accessioning laboratory according to standard operating procedures. Cold packs/pouches should be used if placing specimens in a lockbox for courier pick-up. STAT pick-up cannot be ordered for these tests.

## Acceptable COVID-19 specimen transport media and swabs for test codes 39444 and 39433

<p><b>VCM (Diagnostic Hybrids)<sup>1</sup></b> NP kit ordering information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PeopleSoft item #: 142059</li> <li>• PeopleSoft product ID #: S05</li> <li>• Quanam product ID #: S05</li> <li>• Ordered by the EA (each)</li> </ul> <p>OP kit ordering information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PeopleSoft item #: 142060</li> <li>• PeopleSoft product ID #: S03</li> <li>• Quanam product ID #: S03</li> <li>• Ordered by the EA (each)</li> </ul>	<div style="background-color: #76b82a; color: white; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 5px; font-weight: bold;">Nasopharyngeal (NP) swab</div>  <p style="font-size: small; margin-top: 5px;">S05 – SWAB, VCM, NASAL, FLOCKED, 1/EA</p>	<div style="background-color: #4f81bd; color: white; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 5px; font-weight: bold;">Oropharyngeal (OP) swab</div>  <p style="font-size: small; margin-top: 5px;">S03 – SWAB, VCM, LESION FLOQSWAB, 1/EA</p>
---	--	---

**Acceptable COVID-19 specimen transport media and swabs for test codes 39444 and 39433, continued**

**VCM (Diagnostic Hybrids)<sup>1</sup>, continued**



Lesion swabs (Quest supply # S03) are preferred for oropharyngeal samples.

- Both swabs in supply kit S03 are the same; only one is necessary for specimen collection
- Cervical swabs (Quest supply # S06) are acceptable but only the smaller swab should be used for specimen collection

**Amies liquid elution swab (Eswab)**

ESwab with 1 mL of Amies fluid in the transport vial

Routine swab–OP swab  
Minitip swab–NP swab

Swab, ESwab (Amies liquid elution swab) routine, white cap, Amies Medium, 1/each:  
PeopleSoft #: 164115  
PeopleSoft product ID #: S12  
Quanum product ID #: S12  
Ordered by the EA (each)

SWAB, E-SWAB, (Amies liquid elution swab) minitip, 1/each  
PeopleSoft #: 161558  
PeopleSoft product ID #: S10  
Quanum product ID #: S10  
Ordered by the EA (each)



OP swab

Minitip–NP swab

**VCM (Diagnostic Hybrids)<sup>1</sup>**



S06: Acceptable but no longer able to be ordered through Quest

**Acceptable COVID-19 specimen transport media and swabs for test codes 39444 and 39433, continued**

**UTM (Copan)<sup>2</sup>**

Combo collection kit nasopharyngeal and oropharyngeal  
321 C  
NP Collection Kit-305C  
OP Collection Kit-306C  
UTM medium 3 mL-330C  
NP flocked swab-503C501  
OP flocked swab-519C501



**UVT (BD)<sup>3</sup>**

Combo collection kit nasopharyngeal and oropharyngeal 3 mL  
  
22053 (1 mL-220526)  
NP Collection Kit-220528  
OP Collection Kit-220528  
UTM medium 3 mL-220220 (1mL-220244)  
NP flocked swab-503C501  
OP flocked swab-519C501



**Cepheid<sup>®</sup> Xpert<sup>®</sup> Sample Collection Kit for Viruses<sup>4</sup>**

B-100 NP  
F-100 OP



B-100 for NP



F-100 for OP

**Hardy Diagnostics Healthlink UTM<sup>5</sup>**

Hardy: 3C036NHL 3mL: NP  
Hardy: 3C037NHL 3mL: NP  
Hardy: 3C040NHL 1mL: NP  
Hardy: 3C038NHL 3 mL: OP  
Hardy: 3C011NHL 1mL OP

Hardy: 3C039NHL 3 mL (NP and OP)  
Hardy: 302CHL 3 mL (2 OP with plastic applicator)



Hardy: 3C036NHL: NP



Hardy: 3C038NHL: OP

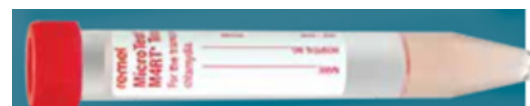
**M4 (Fisher/Remel)<sup>6</sup>**

Contains vancomycin, amphotericin B, and colistin and is suitable for transport of viruses, Chlamydiae, Mycoplasma and Ureaplasma



**M4RT (Fisher/Remel)<sup>6</sup>**

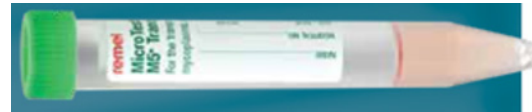
Contains gentamicin and amphotericin B and is only suitable for transport of viruses and Chlamydiae



**Acceptable COVID-19 specimen transport media and swabs for test codes 39444 and 39433, continued**

**M5 (Fisher/Remel)<sup>6</sup>**

Similar to the M4, but it does not contain gelatin



**M6 (Fisher/Remel)<sup>6</sup>**

Contains gelatin, vancomycin, amphotericin B, and colistin for the transport of viruses, Chlamydiae, Ureaplasmas, and Mycoplasmas



**Puritan<sup>®</sup> UniTranz-RT Universal Transport Medium (UTM) with no swabs**

1 mL (UT-100); 3 mL (UT-300)

**Puritan<sup>®</sup> UniTranz-RT UTM with flocked swabs for NP (1 mL)**

Minitip (UT-116 and UT-316)  
Ultrafine flocked swabs (UT-117)  
Elongated swab (UT-367)

**Puritan<sup>®</sup> UniTranz-RT UTM with flocked swabs for NP (3 mL)**

Ultrafine flocked swabs (UT-317)

**Puritan<sup>®</sup> UniTranz-RT UTM with flocked swabs for OP (1 mL)**

Large flocked swab (UT-106)  
Elongated flocked swab (UT-306)

**Puritan<sup>®</sup> UniTranz-RT UTM with Polyester swabs for OP (3 mL)**

One swab (UT-361)  
Two swabs (UT-362)  
NP and OP both 1 minitip and 1 standard (UT-366 and UT-302)



**Starplex<sup>™</sup> Scientific Multitrans<sup>™</sup> with flocked swabs from Fisher Scientific**

NP flocked: 23-038-096  
OP regular flocked swab: 22-046-450



**Acceptable COVID-19 specimen transport media and swabs for test codes 39444 and 39433, continued**

**Copan ESwab™<sup>7</sup>**

Flocked swab with 1 mL of liquid Amies in a plastic, screw-cap tube

White cap (OP flocked swab): Cat#480C or 4C012S.A  
 Green cap (minitip flocked swab for NP): Cat#481C  
 Blue cap (wire shaft/flexible minitip for NP): Cat#482C



White-OP  
 Green and blue-NP

**BD ESwab™<sup>8</sup>**

1 mL of modified liquid Amies medium packaged with a nylon flocked swab

The system is available in 3 flocked swab formats: regular (white), minitip (green) and flexible minitip (blue)

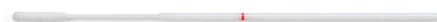
White (reg flocked swab) OP: Cat#220245  
 Green (minitip flocked swab) NP: Cat#220246  
 Blue (flexible minitip) NP: Cat#220532



White-OP  
 Green and blue-NP

**Puritan® Opti-Swab™ 1 mL Liquid Amies Transport Medium w/ 6" elongated flock swab<sup>9</sup>**

Item # LA-106 for OP swab



Green-NP

**Puritan® Opti-Swab™ 1 mL Liquid Amies Transport Medium w/ 6" minitip flock swab<sup>10</sup>**

Item # LA-116 for NP swab



Blue-NP

**Puritan® Opti-Swab™ 1 mL Liquid Amies Transport Medium w/ 6" ultrafine flock swab<sup>11</sup>**

Item #LA-117 for NP swab



White-OP

**Unacceptable specimens for both test code 39433 and test code 39444**

**Calcium alginate swabs, wooden shafted swabs, charcoal medium, anaerobic swab/transport medium**

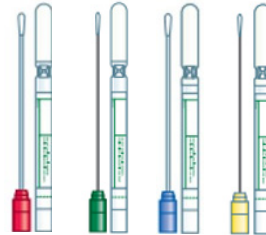
**Swab in Amies liquid transport**

Amies in swabs is generally in a sponge so there is no fluid to test for COVID-19

Single or double swab (red cap)  
Twisted wire shaft swab (green cap)

**Swab in Amies gel transport**

Gel is not acceptable for PCR  
Single or double swab (blue cap)  
Twisted wire shaft swab (yellow cap)



**BD EZ Swab (single swab)<sup>12</sup>**

Product code 220093



Available with liquid Stuart or liquid Amies media in more than 15 swab and shaft configurations, BD CultureSwab products are designed to meet a wide range of transport needs<sup>3</sup>

**BD EZ Swab (double swab)<sup>13</sup>**

Product code 220105



BD BBL™ CultureSwab™ EZ II collection and transport systems are simple-to-use, media-free systems that contain a patented polyurethane foam swab

**BD MaxV<sup>14</sup>**

Product code 220235 (single swab, gel/no charcoal)

Product code 220236 (double swab, Amies gel/no charcoal)

Product code 220122 (dbl swab, Amies gel w/ charcoal)



The BD CultureSwab MaxV system is available with liquid Stuart or liquid Amies media, in single- or double-swab formats, for the transport of aerobes. Additionally, the BD CultureSwab MaxV (+) system is available in Amies gel medium without charcoal, in single- and double-swab formats, for the transport of aerobic and facultative anaerobic organisms<sup>5</sup>

**BBL BD CultureSwab™–Liquid Stuart (minitip swab-green cap)**

Product code 220133



**Quidel urethral swab**

PeopleSoft #: 142058  
PeopleSoft product ID #: S09  
Quanam product ID #: S09  
Mfg Part #: #99-08014-VCM



### Ref: Equivalency—Copan Universal Transport Medium (UTM)

The products described in the accompanying table are *equivalent* products. They are manufactured in identical fashion with all raw materials being utilized in all products being equivalent and at the same ratios.

**Specifically, Copan Universal Transport Medium (UTM), BD UVT, Cepheid XPert Sample Collection Kit for Viruses, Hardy-HealthLink UTM and Quest VCM transports are equivalent products.**

Copan	Type	Description	Quest	Cepheid	Hardy/Healthlink	BD	DHI/Quidel	Fisher Healthcare
305C	Sample collection kit (nasopharyngeal)	Nasopharyngeal collection kit: flexible minitip flocced swab + 3 mL UTM® tube	S05	SWAB/B-100	3C036NHL	220526 /220531	403C	230001720
306C	Sample collection kit (oropharyngeal)	Oropharyngeal collection kit: regular flocced swab + 3 mL UTM® tube	S03	SWAB/F-100	3C038NHL	220528	402C	23001722
330C	Collection kit component	3 mL UTM® medium in 16x100 mm tube	NA	NA	330CHL	UVT 220244 /220220	330C.DHI	23001718
503CS01	Collection kit component	Flexible minitip (nasopharyngeal) flocced swab	NA	NA	NA	220252	503CS01.DHI	23600952
519CS01	Collection kit component	Regular (oropharyngeal) flocced swab	NA	NA	NA	220250	NA	23600957
321C	Combo collection kit nasopharyngeal and oropharyngeal	Flexible minitip flocced swab + regular flocced swab + 3 mL UTM® tube	NA	NA	3C039NHL	220527	99-08021	NA

### References

1. Simplify lab-related tasks for better practice workflow. Quest Diagnostics website. Published December 2018. Accessed March 12, 2020. <https://hopenroll.questdiagnostics.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/NEW-Quantum-for-HCP-Website-Brochure.pdf>
2. Copan increases production of UTM COVID-19 sample collection kits. Medical Supply Company Ltd website. Published March 5, 2020. Accessed March 12, 2020. <https://www.medical-supply.ie/2020/03/05/copan-increases-production-of-utm/>
3. Becton Dickinson website. Accessed March 12, 2020. <https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&id=27BCDE77797251CA0BFBA2B329E00DDA754FDA75&thid=OIP.4gENK8zrMNv1ViLpdJC6gwHaF-&exph=900&expw=1116&q=BD+viral+transport+media&selectedindex=5&ajaxhist=0&vt=0&sim=11>
4. Cepheid product website. Accessed March 12, 2020. [https://www.cephheid.com/?msclkid=e78ea74e94ed19d1538ef924e1b802e7&utm\\_source=bing&utm\\_medium=cpc&utm\\_campaign=USA%7CCepheid%7CCBM&utm\\_term=%2BCepheid&utm\\_content=Cepheid](https://www.cephheid.com/?msclkid=e78ea74e94ed19d1538ef924e1b802e7&utm_source=bing&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=USA%7CCepheid%7CCBM&utm_term=%2BCepheid&utm_content=Cepheid)
5. Universal transport medium. Hardy Diagnostics/Healthlink website. Accessed March 12, 2020. [https://hardydiagnostics.com/industry\\_content/universal-transport-medium-2/](https://hardydiagnostics.com/industry_content/universal-transport-medium-2/)
6. Thermo Scientific Specimen Collection and Transport Solutions—US. Thermofisher catalog website. Published March 2017. Accessed March 12, 2020. [https://assets.thermofisher.com/TFS-Assets/MBD/brochures/Collection-and-Transport-Solutions-Booklet\(US\).pdf](https://assets.thermofisher.com/TFS-Assets/MBD/brochures/Collection-and-Transport-Solutions-Booklet(US).pdf)
7. Copan Diagnostics product insert website. Accessed March 17, 2020. [https://www.copanusa.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/ESwab-Package-Insert\\_HPC030\\_eSwab\\_copoliestere\\_Rev00\\_Date2016.02.pdf](https://www.copanusa.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/ESwab-Package-Insert_HPC030_eSwab_copoliestere_Rev00_Date2016.02.pdf)
8. Becton Dickinson website. Accessed March 17, 2020. <https://www.bd.com/en-us/offerings/capabilities/specimen-collection/swab-based-specimen-collection/bd-eswab-collection-and-transport-system>
9. Puritan Opti-Swab website. Accessed March 17, 2020. <https://www.puritanmedproducts.com/diagnostics-specimen-collection/collection-transport-systems/la-106.html>
10. Puritan Opti-Swab website. Accessed March 17, 2020. <https://www.puritanmedproducts.com/la-116.html>
11. Puritan Opti-Swab website. Accessed March 17, 2020. <https://www.puritanmedproducts.com/la-117.html>
12. Becton Dickinson website. Accessed March 17, 2020. <https://www.bd.com/en-us/offerings/capabilities/specimen-collection/swab-based-specimen-collection/cultureswab-collection-and-transport-systems>
13. Becton Dickinson website. Accessed March 17, 2020. <https://www.bd.com/en-us/offerings/capabilities/specimen-collection/swab-based-specimen-collection/bd-bbl-cultureswab-ez-collection-and-transport-systems>
14. Becton Dickinson website. Accessed March 17, 2020. <https://www.bd.com/en-us/offerings/capabilities/specimen-collection/swab-based-specimen-collection/bd-cultureswab-maxv-collection-and-transport-systems>

### QuestDiagnostics.com

Quest, Quest Diagnostics, any associated logos, and all associated Quest Diagnostics registered or unregistered trademarks are the property of Quest Diagnostics. All third-party marks—® and ™—are the property of their respective owners. © 2020 Quest Diagnostics Incorporated. All rights reserved. MI9164 03/2020