



Australian Government



PHLN

Public Health Laboratory Network

HOW TO SELF-COLLECT A COVID-19 SWAB

This guide shows you how to use a swab to collect a respiratory sample from your throat and nose for testing. You should only self-collect a sample if you are asked to by a doctor, testing clinic or collection centre.

The Public Health Laboratory Network (PHLN) has prepared this guide to help you.

1

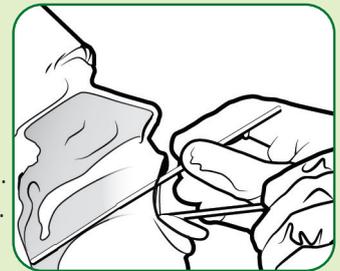
Preparation

- Use the same swab for your throat and nose. Your doctor or health service provider will give you the swab.
- Wash or sanitise your hands before and after collecting your sample.
- Have a tongue depressor (a flat, thin piece of wood like an ice cream stick) and mirror ready.

2

Throat Swab

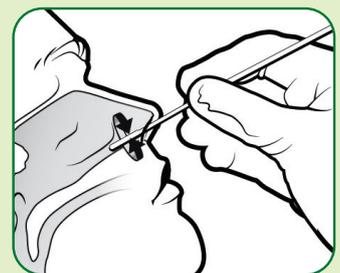
- Take the tube out of the packet, unscrew the lid and stand the tube on a stable surface.
- Take the swab out of the packet. Do not touch the padded tip.
- Tilt your head back in front of a mirror and stick out your tongue. Use the tongue depressor to hold down the back of your tongue. You should see your tonsils.
- Without touching the sides of your mouth or tongue, gently scrape the back of your throat and tonsil area.
- Take the swab out without touching any other parts of your mouth.



3

Swabbing both nostrils

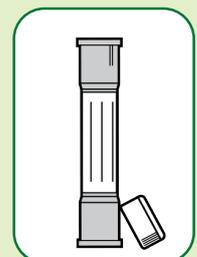
- Insert the padded tip of the same swab 2-3 cm into your first nostril (or until you feel resistance). Make sure the swab passes horizontally along the bottom of your nostril.
- Gently rotate the swab several times.
- Repeat the same steps with your other nostril.
- Do not put the swab down.



4

Packaging and delivering the sample

- Carefully insert the padded tip of the swab into the tube. For some testing kits, you will need to snap the end off the swab. The swab will show where. The testing kit instructions will tell you if you need to do this. Firmly screw the lid onto the tube so there is no leakage.
- Wash or sanitise your hands.
- Write your details on the label on the tube and write the specimen type as a 'self-collection'.
- Take the sample to your doctor or health service provider, following their advice about how to deliver your sample.



The PHLN has published detailed guidance on collecting specimens to test for SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19). Their guidance is on the **Department of Health's website**.