Check List: Managing Patients who may have Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

Guidance for Marin County Clinicians
Marin County Division of Public Health
Jan 24, 2020

1. **Identify patients who may have respiratory illness caused by 2019-nCoV**

   Healthcare providers should screen for travel history on all patients with potentially infectious disease, especially those with fever and acute respiratory illness. Place visible signage requesting visitors with a fever and recent international travel to notify a staff member.

2. **Immediately isolate patients reporting fever (T >100.4°F or >38°C), lower respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), and travel to Wuhan City, China within 14 days prior to illness or close contact with an ill person with 2019-nCoV.**

   - Place surgical mask on patient.
   - Place patient in private room with door closed (ideally, negative pressure airborne isolation room).

3. **Implement infection control procedures for healthcare workers**

   - Standard precautions
   - Contact precautions (gloves, gown)
   - Airborne precautions (N95 mask or PAPR)
   - Eye protection (goggles or face shield)

4. **Immediately report the patient to Marin County Public Health: 415-473-4163**

   Public Health will advise on the next steps.

5. **Collect specimens for laboratory diagnosis**

   See Specimen Collection instructions next page.

6. **Continue medical evaluation and empiric treatment for other causes of respiratory infection or pneumonia as clinically indicated**

   All patients with suspected nCoV-2019 infection should also be tested for common causes of respiratory infection and pneumonia as clinically indicated. **Testing for other respiratory pathogens should not delay specimen collection for nCoV-2019 testing.**

7. **Discuss plan of care with Marin County Public Health prior to discharge**
Continue patient isolation and infection control procedures as above.

**Specimen Collection Instructions**

CDC recommends the collection of specimens from (1) the upper respiratory tract, (2) serum, and – if recommended in consultation with public health - (3) the lower respiratory tract.

1. **Upper respiratory tract**
   - **Nasopharyngeal swab AND oropharyngeal swab (NP/OP swab):** Use a synthetic fiber swab with plastic shaft. Do not use calcium alginate swabs or swabs with wooden shafts.

     **Nasopharyngeal:** insert swab into nostril parallel to the palate, leave swab in place for a few seconds to absorb secretions. Swab both nasopharyngeal areas with the same swab.

     **Oropharyngeal:** swab the posterior pharynx, avoiding the tongue.

     Place each swab into a separate sterile tube, each with 2-3 ml of viral transport media. Do NOT combine NP/OP swab specimens; keep swabs in separate viral transport media collection tubes. Refrigerate at 2-8°C.

     OR
   - **Nasopharyngeal wash/aspirate or nasal aspirate:** collect 2-3 mL into a sterile, leak-proof, screw-cap sputum collection cup or sterile dry container. Refrigerate at 2-8°C.

2. **Serum**
   - Collect 1 tube (5-10 mL) of whole blood in a serum separator tube (minimum 1 mL whole blood is needed for pediatric patients). Refrigerate at 2-8°C.

3. **Lower respiratory tract (if recommended in consultation with public health)**
   - **Sputum:** Collect sputum only if the patient is producing sputum; do not perform sputum induction procedures.

     Have the patient rinse the mouth with water and then expectorate deep cough sputum directly into a sterile, leak-proof, screw-cap sputum collection cup or sterile dry container. Refrigerate at 2-8°C.

     OR
   - **Bronchoalveolar lavage, tracheal aspirate, or pleural fluid:** 2-3 mL in a sterile, leak-proof, screw-cap sputum collection cup or sterile dry container. Refrigerate at 2-8°C.

   **Note:** If specimens cannot be collected at the healthcare facility, do not refer the patient to another facility to obtain specimens. Instead, notify Public Health to discuss.

**Specimen Handling Instructions**

Upon approval by Marin Public Health, arrangements will be made for prompt transport of specimens for 2019-nCoV testing to the regional Public Health Laboratory (PHL). Use Category B infectious substance packaging instructions. The PHL will ship specimens to CDC for testing.

Do not send specimens directly to CDC or CDPH.


- For biosafety reasons, it is **not** recommended to perform viral isolation in cell culture or initial characterization of viral agents recovered in cultures of specimens from a person under investigation for 2019-nCoV.