

## Division of Laboratory Medicine

Molecular Microbiology

# Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV)

## General information

**Collection container (including preservatives):** Virus Transport Medium

Undertaken by local clinician/infection specialist in conjunction with the duty Virologist at PHL Manchester (Tel. 0161 276 8853/4277, or Manchester Royal Infirmary (MRI) switchboard out of hours (0161 276 1234)

Advice is also available from the Infectious Diseases team at North Manchester General Hospital (Tel: 0161 795 4567)

Ensure full PPE is worn by the clinical team assessing the patient:

([https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/554055/MERS\\_IPC\\_guidance\\_Sept\\_2016.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/554055/MERS_IPC_guidance_Sept_2016.pdf))

**Specimen type:** Sputum, BAL, Nose swab, Throat swab

**Specimen transport:** Collect samples for MERS-CoV testing: Lower respiratory tract sample if possible, or one set of nose and throat swabs in virus transport medium otherwise. Specify whether respiratory virus testing is required in addition (NB: it would also be chargeable)

Collect samples for local microbiology testing (e.g. blood cultures, sputum, urine for Legionella and pneumococcal antigen testing)

Arrange transport to PHL Manchester in time for next test run (see below):

- Virology Reception, 3rd Floor, Clinical Sciences Building One, MRI, M13 9WL or, out of hours,
- Central Specimen Reception, Ground Floor, Clinical Sciences Building One, MRI, M13 9WL

(Category B transport [http://www.who.int/ihr/publications/who\\_hse\\_ihr\\_2012.12/en/](http://www.who.int/ihr/publications/who_hse_ihr_2012.12/en/))

Label '**Urgent Virology samples, do not open outside Containment Level 3 Laboratory in Microbiology**'

**Minimum volume of sample:** Minimum volume 500µl

**Special precautions:** If processing is delayed, refrigeration is preferable to storage at ambient temperature. Delays of over 48hr are undesirable.

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### Laboratory Information

**Measurement units:** Positive or Negative

**Biological reference units:** Not applicable

**Turnaround time for result (working days):**

- Monday to Friday: Samples received by 13:00 will be reported the same day
- Saturday and Sunday: Samples received by 09:00 will be reported the same day

### Clinical information

**Clinical decision points:** Not applicable

**Factors known to significantly affect the results:** False negative results may occur for a variety of reasons, for example inappropriate timing of sample collection, inappropriate sample, presence of virus below the detectable limit of the assay.

New and emerging variants may also occur which may not be detected by this assay. Towards the limit of detection of an assay sampling variation will result in lower reproducibility.

**(Last updated September 2019)**