

October 4, 2022

To:

MS Clinical Laboratory Partners

From:

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Public Health Laboratory Director

Subject:

Suspect Monkeypox Virus Infection Testing

Testing for monkeypox is available at the Mississippi Public Health Laboratory (MPHL). The MPHL will only accept specimens collected and transported dry. The submitted specimens will only be tested for non-variola Orthopoxvirus.

Specimen Requirements

Specimen Type	Dry Swabs ONLY (two for each lesion)
Collection	 Use TWO separate dry swabs (either polyester, nylon, or Dacron) to collect infected cells from the base of the lesion by swabbing/brushing the lesion vigorously with the swab applicator. Break off the swab applicator into an individual sterile container (conical tube, 1.5- or 2-mL screw-capped tube or urine cup). The swabs must be submitted dry; do NOT add any transport media to the container. Place each specimen set (1 lesion) into a biohazard bag that contains an absorbent.
Storage and transport	 Refrigerate (2–8°C) specimens within an hour of collection. Refrigerated specimens must be shipped on cold packs in a cooler that is inside a rigid box and sent to the MPHL as a Category B infectious substance. Triple pack the specimens using the following procedure: Place each specimen set (1lesion) sealed biohazard bag into a leakproof secondary bag. Place sealed bag of specimens into a Styrofoam cooler containing frozen cold packs. Close the lid and place the Styrofoam cooler inside the sturdy box. If the box does not fit tightly, place additional material to fill the extra space. Place a list of contents and paperwork inside the cooler in a sealed water-proof bag. Specimens must be kept cold with cold ice packs. Several cold ice packs should be used to ensure specimens remain cold during transport to MPHL Pre-packaged specimens may be delivered directly to the MPHL or can be dropped off at a local MSDH clinic for overnight delivery to the MPHL. Specimens should be shipped as soon as possible but must be received within 5 days of collection.
Submission information	A MPHL Miscellaneous Laboratory Examination Request must accompany each sample/collection site. Label the outside of all tubes with the patient's name, unique identifier, date of collection, source of specimen (vesicle/pustule) and collection site (face, left leg, etc).

Shipping Address	Mississippi Public Health Laboratory Attn: Molecular Diagnostics Section 570 East Woodrow Wilson Drive
	Jackson, MS 39216

^{*}One dry swab will be tested at the MPHL for non-variola Orthopoxvirus. The CDC may provide Monkeypox virus-specific testing on the second dry swab specimen if the first dry swab is positive at the MPHL.

Specimen Collection

To collect vesicular and pustular material:

- 1. Sanitize the patient's skin with an alcohol wipe and allow skin to dry.
- 2. For the each of the two dry swabs collected from each lesion, label a sterile container with the required information and remove swab from the outer sheath.
- 3. Collect cells from the lesion base by gently but firmly rolling the dry swab back and forth across the base of an uncapped lesion.
- 4. Place each swab into a separate sterile container and cap firmly. The container must NOT contain any transport media. The swab must be shipped dry.
- 5. Place both swab containers from the same lesion into a biohazard bag. Insert a completed MPHL Miscellaneous Laboratory Test Examination Request in the outside pocket of the biohazard bag. Seal the bag.
- 6. Repeat this process on different lesions.
- 7. After specimen collection is completed, all protective materials worn by the specimen collector (gloves, mask, gown, etc.) and all used sample collection materials (alcohol wipes, holders, etc.) must be placed in red biohazard bags and autoclaved or incinerated prior to disposal. **Thorough handwashing using soap** should be done immediately after specimen collection and following removal of personal protective equipment.
- 8. Specimens must be refrigerated or frozen within one hour of collection.

Infection Control Guidelines

Clinicians should employ a combination of standard, contact, and droplet precautions when assessing patients who present with fever and vesicular/pustular rash. Recommendations include wearing disposable gown and gloves for patient contact, using a NIOSH-certified N95 (or comparable) filtering disposable respirator that has been fit-tested, and using eye protection (e.g., face shields or goggles) if medical procedures may lead to splashing or spraying of a patient's body fluids. If a patient presenting for care at a hospital or other health care facility is suspected of having monkeypox, infection control personnel should be notified immediately.

For more information on infection prevention and control of monkeypox, please visit the CDC website for this situation at https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/outbreak/current.html or the monkeypox main information page at https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/index.html.

Result Reporting

All testing results will be reported back to the submitting facility identified on the MPHL Miscellaneous Laboratory Test Examination Request provided with the specimens within 3 days of submission. All MPHL testing results will be reported as final. Any additional testing performed by the CDC will be reported back only to the Office of Epidemiology.