

Monkeypox Sample Collection and Referral

**PLEASE REPORT ALL SUSPECT AND PROBABLE CASES TO DISEASE CONTROL IMMEDIATELY
BY CALLING 701.328.2378/800.472.2180**

Monkeypox is an *orthopoxvirus* that is endemic to central and western Africa. Starting in May of 2022, widespread identification of Monkeypox has been confirmed in non-endemic areas, including the United States. The ND Department of Health Laboratory Services (ND Lab) will utilize a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test to detect *orthopoxvirus*. Specimens that test positive for *orthopoxvirus* at the State Lab will be sent to CDC for confirmatory testing and further classification. Any laboratory questions can be directed to Stacey Alexander or Maggie Kuklok at 701-328-6272.

Collection of Specimen

Using two sterile, dry **synthetic** swabs (including, but not limited to polyester, nylon, or Dacron) with a plastic, wood, or thin aluminum shaft, swab the lesion vigorously to collect adequate DNA.

- Two swabs from each lesion should be collected for testing.
- Do not use cotton or rayon swabs.
- It is not necessary to de-roof the lesion before swabbing.

Break off the end of each swab's applicator into a 1.5- or 2-mL screw-capped tube with O-ring or place the entire swab in a sterile container that has a gasket seal like a 15 mL conical tube.

- Multiple swabs from different locations on the body or from lesions which differ in appearance can also be collected. Please differentiate on the tubes if more than one lesion is swabbed.
- Swabs and other specimens should each be placed in different containers.

Dry swabs are preferred for testing

- If a screw capped 1.5/2 ml or 15ml conical tube is not available swabs in Viral Transport Media (VTM) are also acceptable.
- Universal Transport Media (UTM) is **not acceptable** and any samples submitted in UTM will be rejected.

Sample Storage and Shipping

Specimens being sent for testing should be stored as follows:

- Refrigerated (2-8°C) for up to 7 days shipped on ice packs, OR
- Frozen (-20°C or lower) for up to 60 days and shipped on dry ice.

Before shipping, complete a [Laboratory Services Test Request](#) form (found on the Microbiology website) and select: "Bioterrorism Rule Out-Agent Suspected: Monkeypox"

- Specimens can be shipped Category B.
- Samples may also be sent utilizing normal courier routes for your facility to the State Lab.

Turnaround Time

Testing at the ND Lab is performed Monday -Friday and has a turnaround time of 24 hours after receipt in the lab. Turnaround time for CDC confirmatory testing is 1-5 days after receipt in their lab.