

**General Testing Protocol Summary  
Nebraska Medicine SARS-CoV-2 (COVID 19)  
Pediatric Nasopharyngeal Swabbing Recommendations  
(Updated 09/03/2020)**



**Technique is similar to an adult, other than how deep the swab should go and developmentally supporting the infant/child.**

- Depth is shallower and can vary by the age of the child, measure the approximate depth from the patient's entrance of the **ear canal** to the tip of their nose.
  - If needed, mark the swab stick with your measurement
- May need coaching assistance or head holding assistance from parents or another colleague

**Child Positioning:**

- Elevate the chin slightly to access the nostril, and advance the swab perpendicular to the plane of the face, along the floor of the nose.
- Instruct their parent to place their hand on their forehead and hold their arms and legs down if possible. If the child is at a drive thru clinic, parent may need to take the child out of their car seat to help hold.



**Infant Positioning:**

- Developmentally swaddle infant, parent can hold to ensure they are not able to move their head, and/or offer a pacifier.
- Gently insert the swab into the nostril, gently arcing in downward motion along the floor of the nasal passage – you can usually 'feel' when it makes the bend into the naso-pharyngeal space.
- If not able to pass, pull back slightly, rotate swab and advance in downward arc. If it will not pass, you need to stop and re-evaluate.



**Attempts:**

- Max of 2 attempts
- If no success after 2 attempts give the parent these options:
  - Come back at a later time and try again
  - Obtain a sample using anterior nares or Middle Turbinate instead. You must let them know that obtaining the sample this way may not be as accurate as obtaining a nasopharyngeal sample

**IF the patient is too young or uncooperative, you may do an:**

- Anterior nares swab (bilaterally) (leave in place for 10-15 seconds, repeat on the opposite side with the same swab)
- On the lab label include anterior nare as the source
  
- Or a middle turbinate
  - Tilt patient's head back 70 degrees (chin slightly elevated). While gently rotating the swab, insert swab less than one inch (about 2 cm) into nostril (until resistance is met at turbinate). Rotate the swab several times against nasal wall and repeat in other nostril using the same swab.
- On the lab label include middle turbinate as the source

