

Revised Pre-Op COVID-19 Testing Plan FAQ's (8/23/21)
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Why is this happening?

With the discontinuation of the Executive Orders, phlebotomists in our Patient Service Centers (PSC's) can no longer continue to supervise self-collected nasal swabs.

How can we continue to utilize RRH PSC's for pre-op COVID-19 sample collection?

By transitioning to self-collected saliva samples.

How will I order pre-op saliva testing?

As you order pre-op testing today- Care Connect order or paper lab requisition FAXED to Lab Client Services
The Care Connect order and paper requisition will be updated accordingly (available Sept 7).

What will change in my office?

Your office will need to give each patient a **Saliva Collection Device** (calibrated sterile tube) and a **Saliva Collection Instruction Sheet**.

How will my office get saliva testing supplies?

From Aug 31- Sept 3 RRH Couriers and InterVol Volunteers will deliver enough supplies to your office to last several weeks- saliva collection devices, instruction sheets and updated paper requisitions. **No need to place an order for your first round of supplies**- initial supplies will be automatically delivered to all employed and private RRH affiliated offices that order at least one pre-op COVID test per week. By Aug 30 you will know if your office is on the list for automatic supply distribution (watch for a GRIPA communication). For offices not scheduled for automatic supply delivery, this GRIPA communication will also include instructions for picking up a small quantity of supplies at either the Alex Park distribution site or GRIPA. **After this initial delivery (or pick-up), your office will be responsible for re-ordering supplies as needed** (instructions will be included with your initial supplies).

When should my office start using the saliva testing supplies we receive?

Please do not start using any of these supplies until Sept 7th.

Why is an Instruction Sheet needed to collect a saliva sample?

To ensure a valid PCR assay, sample requirements include no eating, drinking (including water, coffee etc) or chewing gum, smoking or chewing tobacco for at least 10-15 minutes prior to collection. The sample must consist of at least 1 ml of saliva (clear, watery fluid), not sputum, and not be discolored or contaminated by food particles.

When and where will patients collect their saliva sample?

3-5 days prior to a scheduled procedure, patients will collect a saliva sample at home (or in a private vehicle) **within 1 hour of arrival at an RRH PSC** where sample registration and inspection will occur.

Why does the patient need to arrive at the PSC within one hour of sample collection?

Prompt refrigeration is required to ensure sample viability.

Will my patient simply "drop off" their saliva sample at a PSC?

No, your patient will need to be seen by a phlebotomist who will visually inspect the collection vial and register the sample; if the sample is not acceptable (> 1 hour from collection, inadequate volume or other visual indication that the sample will likely be rejected in the lab) the patient will be given a second saliva collection vial to try again.

May I collect saliva samples for COVID-19 testing in my office?

No. Due to prompt sample refrigeration requirements, **RRH Labs will not accept saliva samples collected in your office.**

Will PSC locations be the same?

Effective Sept 15, we will expand this service to **all RRH PSC locations Monday through Saturday** (no Sunday testing); information about PSC locations and hours will be included on the patient Saliva Collection Instruction Sheet.

Where will saliva testing be performed?

Our RRH affiliate, Drugscan Laboratory in Horsham, PA

Is COVID-19 testing performed on a saliva sample sufficiently sensitive?

Yes, this assay is as (or more) sensitive than Abbott ID NOW and comparable in sensitivity to nasal swab PCR. Please see [RRH Laboratories COVID-19 Testing Guidance for Ambulatory Settings](#) for more details.

How will results be reported?

No changes in method of results delivery

What if my patient is not a good candidate for saliva collection?

For children less than 5 years of age and others likely not able to provide an adequate saliva sample (e.g. dementia, developmental disabilities, dry mouth etc.) we have developed an alternative **restricted nasal swab collection process.**

How does the restricted nasal swab collection process work?

For procedures scheduled to occur on or after Sept 20 **both Care Connect and non-Care Connect offices will need to utilize a paper COVID-19 laboratory requisition to order a nasal swab collection.** Patients will need to choose from a limited number of nasal swab collection sites (primarily our 5 hospital PAT locations). The ordering provider will need to provide the patient with a Restricted Nasal Swab Patient Instruction Sheet and FAX the completed lab requisition to Lab Client Services (FAX number on requisition).

For patients unable to provide a saliva sample, may I collect a pre-op nasal swab in my office?

Yes, but only if RRH Labs routinely picks up samples from your office. Samples must be ready for your daily scheduled specimen pick-up(s). We will not be able to provide any STAT courier pick-ups for these samples.

After Sept 15, what if a patient needs testing for an ambulatory add-on procedure within the next 24-48 hours?

You will need to follow the paper-based restricted nasal swab collection process described above. Your office will also need to call Lab Client Services (phone number on lab requisition).

What is the last date for nasal swab collection in the RRH PSC's?

Wednesday Sept 15

After Sept 15 what will happen if a patient presents to an RRH PSC with an order for a nasal swab collection?

The patient will be given a saliva sample collection device and asked to go to their vehicle to collect a sample; they will then need to return to the PSC and wait in line a second time for sample inspection and registration (this will likely be a patient dissatisfier). If your patient is unable to produce a saliva sample, your office will be contacted by our Lab Client Services staff and advised of the need to order testing through the restricted nasal swab collection process (this may result in a testing delay).

What will happen if my patient cannot provide an adequate saliva sample or their Sample is rejected by the lab?

As soon as possible your office will be notified by our Lab Client Services staff. You will then need to utilize the paper-based restricted nasal swab collection process or wait for rapid or STAT testing on the day of the patient's procedure. Limited same-day rapid testing is available in most L & D units and in the RGH and Unity OR's only.

When will these changes occur?

Transition to saliva as the primary sample type affects all surgeries, procedures and treatments scheduled September 20, 2021 and beyond. See [RRH Medical Staff Communication Revised Pre-Op/Pre-Procedure COVID-19 Testing Plan](#) for a detailed timeline.