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Specimen Collection in Community Locations- IPAC Guidance

Site setup

Location

- Outdoor specimen collection is preferred

Equipment

- Approved shelter with open ventilation that can be cleaned and disinfected where possible
- Chair for patient that is non-porous (able to be cleaned and disinfected).
- Small table/trolley/cart for placement of alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) and specimen collection supplies
- ABHR
- Garbage can
- Cleaning and disinfecting wipes
- Sturdy bin to store specimens that can be cleaned and disinfected

Hand Hygiene

- ABHR and/or a hand hygiene sink is available for health care providers where donning and doffing occurs, and at point of care.

PPE

- Ensure adequate stock of PPE (stored in clean zone) which includes:
 - Fit tested N95 respirators
 - Reusable, CSA approved eyewear
 - Gowns
 - Gloves in various sizes

Specimen Collection Supplies

- Ensure adequate supply of specimen collection supplies needed
 - Nasopharyngeal (NP) swabs
 - Urine specimen containers
 - Biohazard bags
 - Requisition form.
 - Boxes of tissue

Clean/Dirty Zones

- Always maintain clear separation and awareness of clean and dirty zones. Several different methods may be used to designate these zones, such as dividers and signage. Consult ICP or your team leader to review clean and dirty zones specific to your site.
- Activities in the clean and dirty zones may require the use of PPE and situational awareness of the activities of others working in the environment.
- Some Clean/Dirty Zones overlap because of design of the area and emergency activities. When this occurs, ensure that clean supplies are located at least two meters away from the testing area.

Specimen Collection Recommendations for Suspected Measles Cases

To minimize contamination risk and ensure safe, efficient specimen collection, the following practices are recommended:

- **Nasopharyngeal (NP) Swab Collection:**
 - When possible, designate a “clean” nurse to hold open a biohazard bag for direct placement of the NP swab following collection.
 - Provide the patient with tissues, as NP swabbing may stimulate a runny nose.
 - Instruct the patient to lower their mask just below the nares to facilitate swab collection. If there is a risk of cough reflex, use an appropriate barrier to protect health care providers during the procedure.
- **Urine Specimen Return to a Health Care Provider:**
 - If a patient is returning a urine specimen to the facility, arrange for this exchange to take place outside whenever feasible.
 - Have a clean biohazard bag prepared in advance.
 - Instruct the patient to carefully place the specimen into the clean bag, minimizing handling by health care providers.
 - Have ABHR available for the patient to complete hand hygiene.
- **Drop box for Urine Specimen Return:**
 - Instruct the patient when to drop-off specimen (during open hours, prior to courier collection time if applicable).
 - Consider posting a phone number for patients to call and notify health care providers when drop-off has been completed.
 - Health care providers to ensure specimens are placed in a clean biohazard bag before placing specimen into refrigerator.

Health Care Providers Workflow

- **If health care providers remain outside and do not return into the facility between testing:**
 - Health care providers don all PPE prior to starting testing.
 - Health care providers change gloves and perform hand hygiene between patients/vehicles (not between occupants of same vehicle).
 - Health care providers continue to wear the same N95, eye protection, and gown.
 - Health care providers doff PPE for breaks and change PPE if it becomes soiled or damaged.
- **If the health care providers return into the facility:**
 - Health care providers doff all PPE prior to entering the facility.
 - Health care providers don all PPE prior to resuming testing.

Garbage Handling Guidelines

To reduce contamination risks and ensure safe waste management, follow these best practices:

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):**
 - Always wear gloves when handling garbage bags, including when tying them and transporting to the designated disposal area.
- **Bag Capacity and Handling:**
 - Do not overfill garbage bags—fill to a maximum of $\frac{3}{4}$ full to allow for secure closure.
 - Never compress garbage using hands or tools, as this increases the risk of injury or exposure to contaminated materials.
- **Disposable Gown Disposal:**
 - When disposing of single-use gowns, roll them tightly to minimize waste volume and improve handling.

Indoor Patient Management

If specimen collection will be occurring indoors, strict adherence to IPAC protocols is essential to protect health care providers, patients, and visitors. The following steps must be followed:

- An Interior Health healthcare worker will greet each patient and provide a medical mask, if the patient is not already wearing appropriate PPE as outlined in the Measles Resource. The healthcare worker will provide instruction on proper donning and use of the mask.
- Patients must be instructed to keep their mask on for the duration of their visit. It should only be briefly removed or lowered if necessary, during testing, and must remain on until the patient has exited the facility and returned to their vehicle or transport.
- In situations where a patient is unable or unwilling to wear a mask (e.g., distressed children), the healthcare worker should contact a team lead or colleague for immediate assistance. The goal is to support patient compliance and minimize any potential exposure risk to others within the site.
- Patients should be asked to perform hand hygiene using ABHR upon arrival.
- Create a one-way traffic flow (in one side of testing center and then exit out another way to avoid exposure to other patients waiting for testing).
- The healthcare worker must perform low-level disinfection of all surfaces the patient may have come into contact with, using approved cleaning and disinfecting wipes. Ensure the disinfectant is applied with the required wet contact time as per product instructions.
- Ensure adequate ventilation and air exchanges per hour (ACH)
 - After patient testing indoors, allow appropriate air clearance time for site based on site ACH before reusing space (two hours if ACH is unknown)

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