STUDENT SELF-SWABBING

Since students will have to remove their masks from their noses, we recommend that testing is done in a well-ventilated setting and that when the masks are removed, all staff and students remain at least 6 feet apart.

We recommend taking small groups of students to the testing area and guiding the students in self-swabbing together. Consider how many tests you can run at one time to calculate groups appropriately.

The more preparation the students have the better they will do. Encourage parents to have children practice with soft cotton swabs (q-tips) at home. Talk about the testing to prepare the children in the days prior to the first test and prepare them for how often testing will occur. Consider showing students the images below or using a model of a nose (or just a paper image of a nose), to demonstrate how far the swab is inserted in the nose.

VIDEO DEMONSTRATION OF STUDENT SELF-SWABBING

A demonstration of how students can self-swab for a COVID-19 test can be found here: COVID-19 Testing: Demonstration of Self-Swabbing for Students

STEPS FOR STUDENT SELF-SWABBING

1. Take the students to a well-ventilated setting in a small group to testing site
2. Have the students space out at least 6 feet apart
3. Have the students wash their hands or use hand sanitizer prior to testing
   - If required, students can wash hands before moving to a well-ventilated setting
4. Open the swabs using the end of the swab. Do not touch the top of the swab. Depending on the age of the students you will most likely need to do this for them so they do not accidently touch the swab.
5. Hand out swabs to the students and let students know not to touch the soft cotton end of the swab
6. Have the students slide their masks below their noses (while maintaining a 6-foot distance from them)
7. Have the students place the swab into one of their nostrils and roll the swab around the walls of the nose, rubbing the inside surface of the nose 5 times slowly (should take about 10 seconds), then have the students place the swab in the second nostril and twist the swab around 5 times slowly (again about 10 seconds).
8. Coaching tips:
   - If the swab has a flexible stem, it is helpful to show the students that they should hold it about mid-shaft, otherwise they sometimes hold it at the
very bottom and then cannot get enough force to collect a good specimen.

- Not every student understands the description of how to move the swab the same way and so it is helpful to have a few different options: “this is like cleaning out your nose” “roll it against the side of your nose”, “rub it against the sides of your nose”, “brush the swab around inside your nose”. All descriptions should include “moving it around in a circle”. It is OK to tell them that “it is sort of like picking your nose”—this lightens the mood and also gives them the general sense of the force that they need to use.

- Some students may need to be encouraged to push the swab against the walls of the nose a bit more firmly.

- While observing the students, some coaching may be helpful to get the swab into the right depth. If the student is able to put enough force into the collection, they have likely put the swab in far enough.

- If a student looks uncomfortable, they may have put the swab in too deeply and can be reminded that that they don’t need to put the swab in deeply and that it should not be uncomfortable or hurt to do the swabbing.

9. Have the child pull their mask back above their nose and carefully take the swab back from the student (again reminding the students who are waiting for their swab to be taken, not to touch the cotton end)

10. Run the test according to manufacturer’s instructions

**Supplemental Materials**

Wash or sanitize your hands. Make sure they are dry before starting.

Open Swab
**Swab Left Nostril**

A. Insert the entire absorbent tip of the swab (usually 1/2 to 3/4 of an inch) into left nostril.

B. Firmly brush against insides of nostril in a circular motion 5 times or more.

**Swab Right Nostril**

A. Remove swab and insert it into right nostril.

B. Firmly brush against insides of nostril in a circular motion 5 times or more.

Note: False negative results may occur if the nasal swab is not properly collected.

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**HOW TO COLLECT YOUR ANTERIOR NASAL SWAB SAMPLE FOR COVID-19 TESTING**

Follow the instructions included with your sample kit. Use only materials provided in your kit to collect and store your sample, unless the kit says to do otherwise. Use only an approved sample collection kit given to you by your healthcare provider or personnel at the testing center.

**Initial set-up**

1. Open the sampling kit.

2. Apply hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.

**Sample collection**

3. Remove the swab from the container, being careful not to touch the soft end, which is the absorbent tip.

4. Insert the entire absorbent tip of the swab into your nostril, but do not insert the swab more than 1/4 of an inch (1.5 cm) into your nose.

5. Slowly rotate the swab in a circular path against the inside of your nostril at least 4 times for a total of 15 seconds. Be sure to collect any nasal drainage that may be present on the swab.

6. Gently remove the swab.

7. Using the same swab, repeat steps 4-6 in your other nostril.

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