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Possible options for Viral Transport Media/Universal Transport Media.

Dr. Ball provided the information below for healthcare providers who are running out of viral transport media and swabs. Additionally, only one NP swab and no oral swab is needed for testing at IBL. We believe that commercial laboratories are also only requiring an NP swab, but providers need to check with the commercial laboratories.

From the FDA website,

<https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/emergency-situations-medical-devices/faqs-diagnostic-testing-sars-cov-2>.

Q: I am having trouble obtaining viral transport media/universal transport media (VTM/UTM) to collect and transport patient samples. Are there alternatives that I can use?

A: While VTM/UTM remains the preferred transport media, FDA believes that the following alternative transport media could be used to collect and transport patient samples for molecular RT-PCR SARS-CoV-2 assays in a manner that will stabilize the RNA without meaningful degradation:

- Liquid Amies-based transport media.
 - o Supplies:
 - E-Swab by Copan (Catalogue # 481C and 482C) with regular or flex minitip applicator
 - Opti-Swab by Puritan (Catalogue # LA-117), swab included in kit (Catalog#3317-H).
 - o Storage: Up to 72 hours at 4?, or frozen for longer storage.

If the above are not available, FDA believes that the following could be used to collect and transport samples for molecular RT-PCR sARS-CoV-2 assays:

- Dry swab in saline
 - o Supplies:
 - Puritan: 25-3317-H, 25-3316-U, 25-3316-H, 25-3317-U, 25-3318-U, 25-3318-H, 3316-U, 3317-U, 3318-U, 25-3319-H, 3316-H, 3318-H, 25-3320-U, 25-3320-U EMB 100MM, 25-3320-U EMB 80MM, 25-3320-H and 25-3320-H EMB 80MM

- Copan: 501CS01, 503CS01, 516CS01, 518CS01 and 534CS01
- o Storage: Up to 72 hours at 4?, or frozen for longer storage.

Please be aware that the CDC does not recommend use of calcium alginate swabs or swabs with wooden shafts, as they may contain substances that inactivate some viruses and inhibit PCR testing.

We are continuing to evaluate other options for specimen collection supplies, and we will update this list accordingly as this information becomes available.

Dr. Ball highlighted an approved option that hospitals might be able to use with supplies on hand. If they are electing to submit COVID-19 samples to a commercial reference laboratory, Dr. Ball strongly recommends they check with them first to ensure that a dry swab in saline will be acceptable for their testing (not all approved tests use RT-PCR). IBL has a very rapidly dwindling supply of swabs in VTM. IBL might be able to provide a limited number of kits, but has to limit the number of swabs sent out in order to make them available to as many providers as possible.