

BILH COVID-19 PCR TESTING **NASOPHARYNGEAL SWAB COLLECTION** **TECHNIQUE**

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Due to global shortages of swabs and transport media, COVID-19 test kits may look different

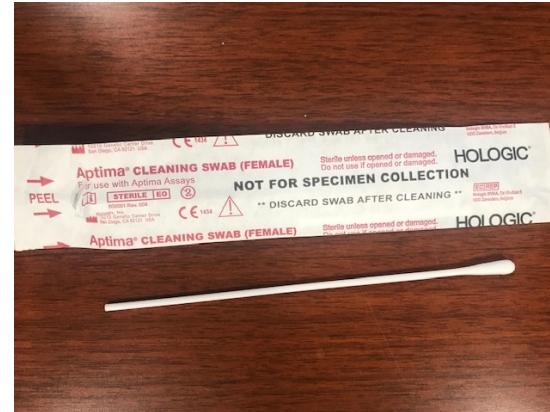
- Swabs
 - Copan flocked swab (preferred, when available)
 - APTIMA Unisex or Multitest swabs (are approved for this use)
- Viral transport media
 - Produced in BIDMC Microbiology Lab
 - Packaged with swabs
- Call institutional distribution when more swabs are needed

All COVID-19 test kits contain the same basic ingredients

- 1 nasopharyngeal swab (Copan flocked swab or other approved type, such as APTIMA)
- 1 tube of viral transport media (e.g., UTM-RT red top)



Copan swab and
viral transport
media



APTIMA swab



BIDMC Viral transport
media

Gather all supplies prior to the procedure

- Private room
- Nasopharyngeal swab kit
- Personal protective equipment
- Ice (only for delayed specimen transport)
- Spare bio-bag for ice, if required
- Lab requisition

Wear required personal protective equipment

- Gown
- Gloves
- Eye protection (goggles, visor, face shield or mask with face shield)
- N95 respirator (if desired, but not required)

Some helpful tips before you start

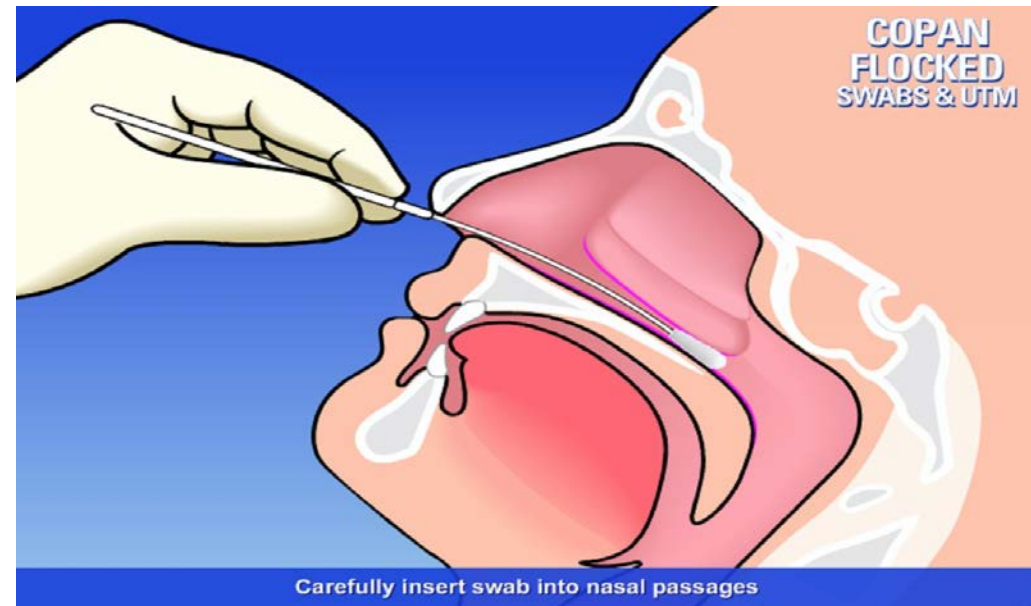
- **Ask the patient if they have ever broken their nose**
 - If so, ask which nares they can breathe more easily through and swab that side
- **Don't let the patient blow their nose** before obtaining the swab as it significantly reduces the number of cells in the specimen

Technique is important – Insert the swab gently

1. Gently insert the swab using a twisting motion
2. If notch is present, advance until it is at the tip of the patient's nose (present on flocked swabs)
3. Swabs be inserted into one nares for a minimum of 10 seconds

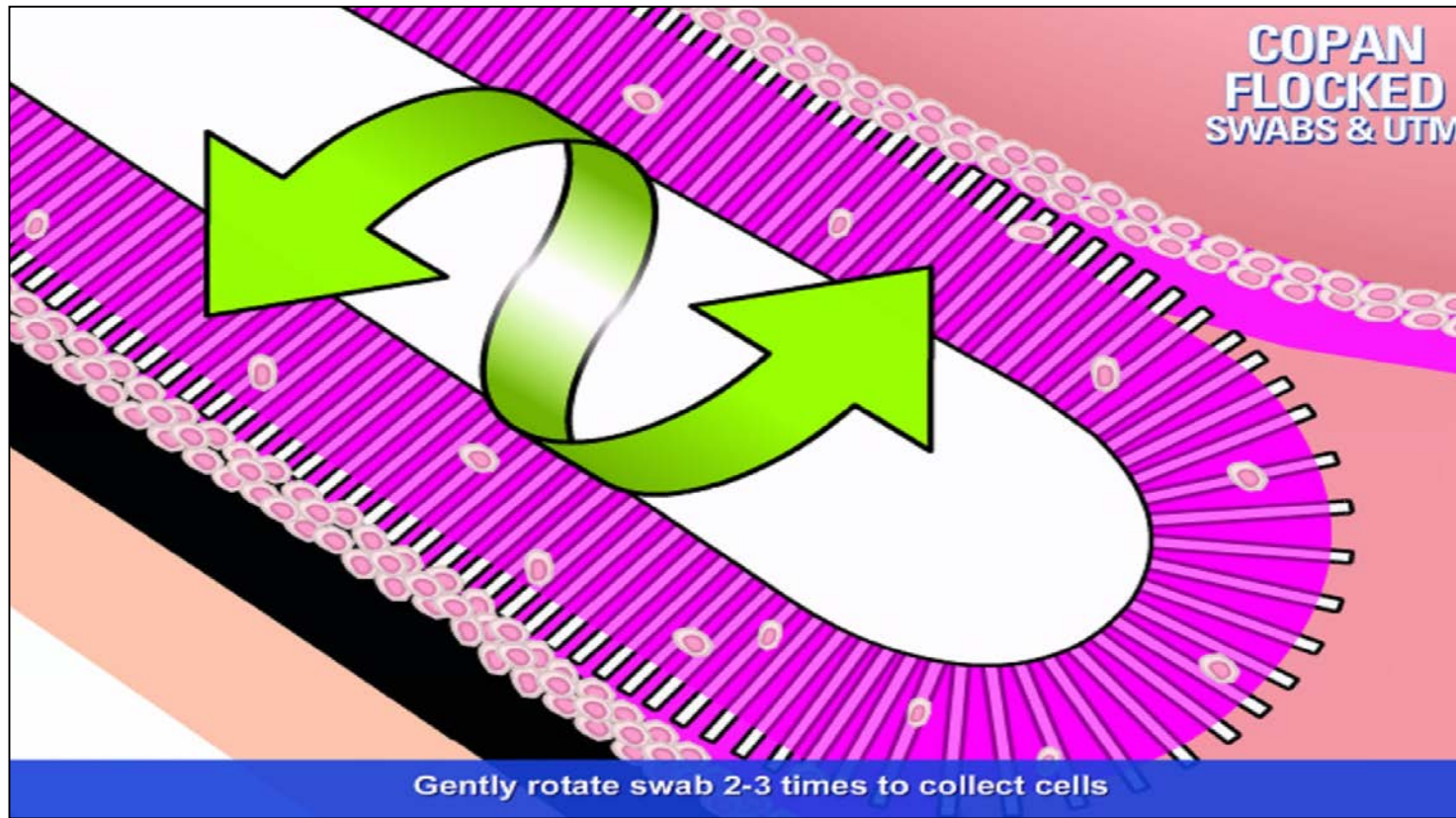


Note: Flocked swab has a molded “notch”, circled in red



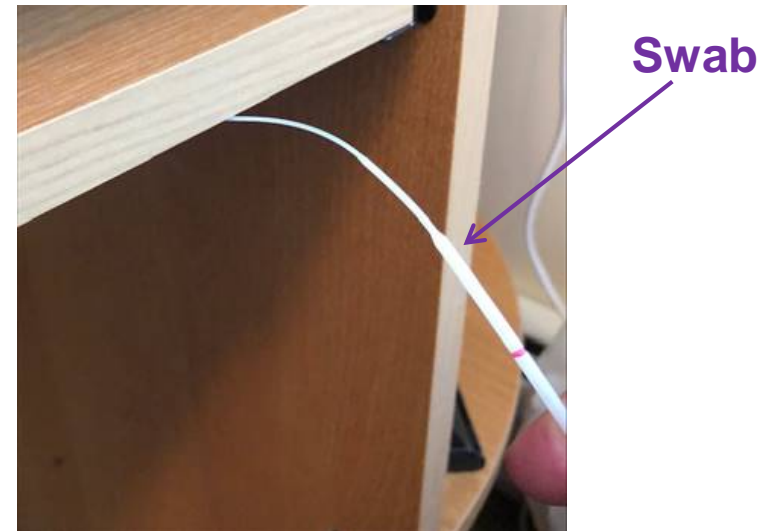
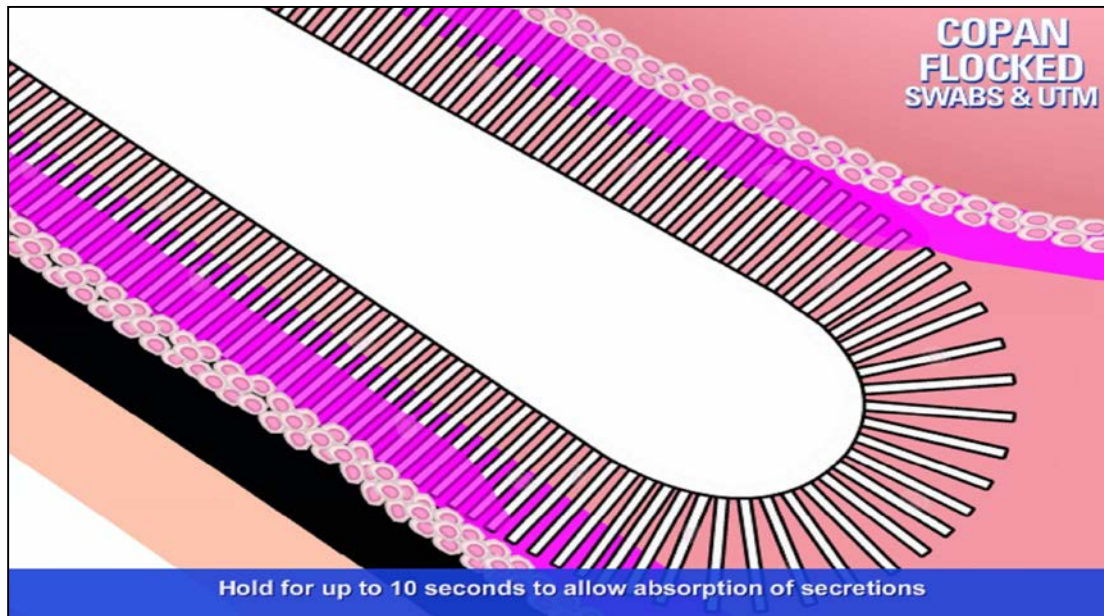
Technique is important – Insert the swab gently

- Gently **rotate** the swab 2-3 times once in place to collect cells



Technique for removal of swab is important to absorb respiratory secretions

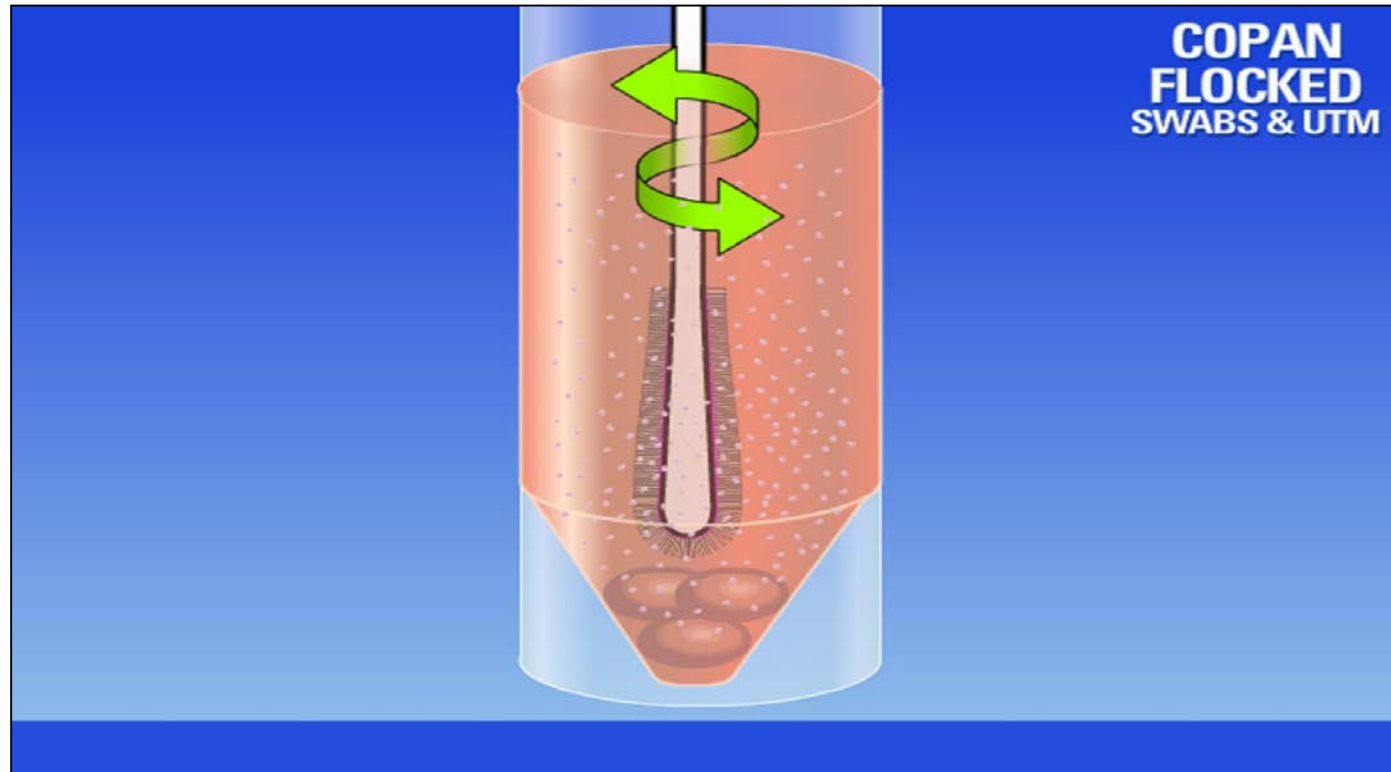
- Leave swab in nares for **10 seconds**
- **Twist swab** as you remove it
- Bend the swab like a “fishing pole” to scrape more cells from the nose as you exit



“Fishing pole” technique

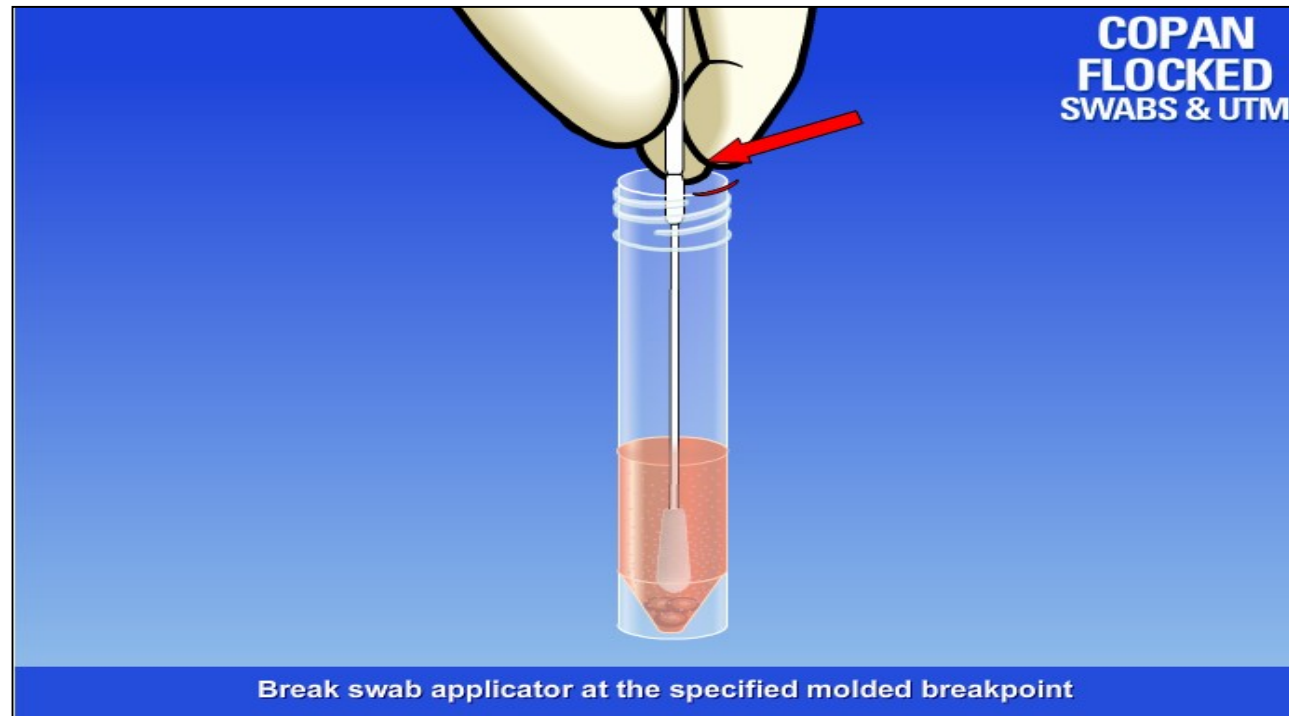
Insert the swab into the tube carefully

- Insert the swab into the tube of viral transport media
- **Gently swirl the swab**



Break off the swab to complete the collection process

- Break the swab by **gently pressing** it against the side of the tube
- If using a flocked swab, press the notch against the side of the tube to break



Package completed NP test kit for transport

- **Tighten cap securely on vial** so that viral transport media does not leak
 - Note: Tubes that arrive with insufficient media cannot be run and repeat test will be needed
- Package on ice for transport
- Run to your local lab or via institutional sendout lab via courier to BIDMC Lab