



SMALLPOX

- Agent Overview:** The causative agent of Smallpox is Variola major. DPHL can test for Varicella zoster, herpes simplex, and vaccinia viruses in specimens from patients at low and moderate risk categories, according to evaluation criteria in the CDC rash illness protocol. Specimens from patients in the high-risk category for possible smallpox will not be tested **at DPHL**. BioSafety Level 4 facilities are required for smallpox testing and specimens will, therefore, be referred to CDC for smallpox testing.
- Lab Specimen Submittal:** Authorization for laboratory specimen submittal must be given by Dr. Jane Getchell, Director DPHL; Christina Pleasanton, Deputy Director; or Debra Rutledge, Bioterrorism Coordinator.
- Types of Specimens Necessary for Testing:** Smallpox, Varicella zoster virus (VZV) and herpes simplex virus: specimen should be obtained from a fresh lesion using a Dacron swab. Place swab in transport medium and transport it to lab within 12 hours of collection. For serological testing to rule out smallpox, collect blood in a serum separator tube (red/black top).
Specimens from patients in the high-risk category will be shipped immediately to CDC.
Specimens from patients in the low and moderate risk category will be tested **at DPHL**. DFA and culture (if necessary) will be performed for VZV and herpes simplex viruses.
PCR is available at DPHL for vaccinia and varicella zoster virus. See separate protocols for specimen requirements.
Please reference the BT Specimen Collection Chart for more detailed information.
- Packaging Instructions:** Chain of custody procedures must be followed for environmental samples or any samples, specimens, or materials that could be used as evidence in a legal proceeding. Clinical specimens must be in unbreakable double containers and the outside of container decontaminated (10% bleach).
- Receiving specimens at DPHL:** Authorized specimens are accepted at the back of the building by the loading dock. Submitter must present ID and have proper forms completed.
- Handling of Specimens:** Specimens should be kept at refrigerator temperature until delivered to the laboratory.
See separate PCR protocols for vaccinia and varicella zoster virus.
- Reporting Results:** PCR may take 4 to 24 hours.
DFA results will be reported within 24 hours.
Culture may take up to 10 days.
Serological results will be reported within 24 hours.
See separate PCR protocols for vaccinia and varicella zoster virus.
- Contact Information:** Jane Getchell, DrPH, DPHL Director (302-223-1520).

24/7 Emergency Contact Number: 1-888-295-5156

Revised: 05/2010

Page 1 of 1