

Norovirus Testing Requirements

NOROVIRUS TESTING REQUIREMENTS

MDCH is here to help local health departments investigate potential norovirus outbreaks. The MDCH Bureau of Laboratories (BOL) offers norovirus PCR testing of stool specimens. Testing is reserved for investigation of norovirus outbreaks only and not for diagnostic purposes.

Due to limited resources, norovirus testing must be pre-approved by the Bureau of Epidemiology. The following requirements must be met before testing may proceed.

1. Collect epidemiologic information, including:
 - ❖ Number of ill cases
 - ❖ Symptoms
 - ❖ Onset date
 - ❖ Duration of illness
 - ❖ Facility characterization (e.g., school, healthcare center or restaurant)
2. Contact Jennifer Beggs or Shannon Andrews-Johnson with the Bureau of Epidemiology, MDCH, at 517-335-8165 to obtain testing approval and shipping instructions.
3. If testing is approved, collect 3–6 specimens from symptomatic cases only. The upper limit for stool collection from an ill individual is 10 days post onset of symptoms.
4. Cases must live in separate households.
5. Specimens must be collected in sterile plastic containers without preservative (e.g., Cary Blair). Leaking specimens will not be tested.
6. Specimen containers must be labeled with:
 - ❖ Submitter information
 - ❖ Date of collection
 - ❖ Outbreak identifier or name
7. Outbreak identifiers should include event name, month, and year, e.g., “Smith Reception 01/10.”
8. Make sure the collection container is properly sealed and labeled prior to mailing, including those specimen containers that have been left with a client.

9. Submit specimens with BOL test requisition form. Please use test code 2951 and include the outbreak identifier or name.

10. Contact Jennifer Beggs or Shannon Andrews-Johnson with the Bureau of Epidemiology, MDCH, at 517-335-8165 to report how many samples were collected and when specimens will be shipped. This information must be provided prior to shipping of specimens.

11. Specimens must be batched and sent together with coolant pack.

12. Ship specimens to your local health department’s regional laboratory. Information about your regional laboratory can be found at www.michigan.gov/mdchlab.

13. Delivery of specimens to the laboratory must occur Monday–Friday during normal business hours.

SAMPLES THAT ARRIVE AT BOL WITHOUT PROPER LABELING, COMPLETED TEST REQUISITIONS, OR SUBMITTER INFORMATION WILL NOT BE TESTED AND WILL BE DISCARDED AS PER CLIA REQUIREMENTS

Since norovirus outbreaks occur unexpectedly, it is suggested that LHD prepare for outbreaks before they occur. Planning ensures accurate and timely responses. Identify your LHD specimen courier or shipping company (e.g., FedEx, UPS). Order and stock specimen collection kits prior to an outbreak occurring. Collection kits (Unit #46 Foodborne Illness Kit) can be ordered through the MDCH Laboratory Support Unit. Contact Craig Fedewa at BOL at 517-335-9040 or fedewac@michigan.gov for more information.

Specimen test results will be released to the LHD by fax and through the Michigan Disease Surveillance System (MDSS). Cases in MDSS can be closed out because individual reports of norovirus are not required to be reported in Michigan. ■