

IMPORTANT – correct completion of COVID-19 swab request forms

It is essential that all relevant information is on the request form accompanying COVID-19 specimens.

Labtests receives around 2,000 COVID-19 specimens per day and this can increase to 7 – 8,000 specimens during surges when alert levels change and positive community cases are reported. When specimens arrive in our laboratory, they are barcoded and the patient demographics are checked on both request form and specimen, from then the samples and paperwork are separated. The form is scanned and the request is entered into the laboratory information system with the details on the request form. Any information, such as time of collection, which is on the sample but not on the request form is not available to data entry staff to enter and will therefore not appear on the test report.

Failure to record all appropriate details on the request form may have an impact on turnaround times of test results for travelers. Please be aware, for example, when the time of sample collection is not recorded on the request form, the HL7 report message will default to 00:00 on the day of collection. This has been interpreted by airline staff as a midnight collection time and could result in the test time falling outside the testing window required for travel.

Patient dropping COVID-19 swabs to the Laboratory

It is advisable for referrers to direct only travel COVID-19 patients to deliver their specimens to our laboratory. Community COVID-19 swabs will not be accepted if a patient drops them at Specimen Reception at the laboratory. As COVID-19 positive patients would be more prevalent in the general community than among those who are traveling, this represents a greater risk of exposure for our staff.

INR Test results

We endeavor to report INR results before close of business each day however this is very dependent on when the patient presents to our collection centre. Patients should be advised or reminded to present for their blood test well before lunch time in order for results to be released before close of business.

Labtests updates to clinical information for referrers

It is advisable for referrers and practice staff to always refer to Labtests official website www.labtests.co.nz for the most up to date information. The practice of printing hard copies can result in misleading information when the hard copy becomes superseded. The following link will take you to the page on our website that has the most information regarding testing <https://www.labtests.co.nz/for-referrers/tests/>

Please note the following documents have been updated this year:

Communication of Critical Results	https://fi-healthscope-media.s3.amazonaws.com/lab-sites/uploads/sites/2/2021/01/criticalresults.pdf
Reference Ranges	https://fi-healthscope-media.s3.amazonaws.com/lab-sites/uploads/sites/2/2021/01/210105BiochemRefRangesBone-IronMetabolism.pdf
Labtests Key Contacts	https://fi-healthscope-media.s3.amazonaws.com/lab-sites/uploads/sites/2/2021/02/210225KeyContacts.pdf