

15 July 2021

Swabbing guidelines

Dear Referrer,

Swabs are not taken by phlebotomy staff at Northland Pathology collection centres. However, certain swab types can be self-collected. Appropriate swabs for self-collection include:

- vaginal swabs (both Aptima swabs for molecular STI testing and standard orange top 'bacterial' swabs),
- vaginal-rectal swabs for Group B Streptococcus screening, and
- MRSA screening swabs.

Swabs from wounds, eyes, and ears should not be self-collected as site preparation and sampling are important for generating valid results.

Where self-collection (from an appropriate site) is desired, supply the patient with the appropriate swab(s) and biohazard bag, advise them to collect at home, then deliver the swab(s) to a collection centre. Swabs can be ordered from our website here: <https://norpath.co.nz/supply-online-order-form/> and are available at the collection centres. However, it is preferred that patients do not collect specimens on site due to limited appropriate facilities.

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