

AHL LabNote

Number 36

updated February 2026

Clinical sampling for Virology testing at AHL – Sampling supplies

One of the most important aspects of diagnostic work is the actual sampling and handling of the samples prior to being received at the diagnostic laboratory. The Animal Health Laboratory submission instructions are available on our website.

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/ahl/submissions/ahl-labnote-27-submission-instructions>

Usually the best sample for microbiology diagnostics is the substrate itself – feces, tissue, or fluid in leak-proof containers (liquids, feces) or leak-proof “whirl-pak” bags (tissue, feces) (“ziplock” bags are discouraged!)

Bacteriology and Mycoplasma

AHL prefers ESwabs, a new transport system for microbiology testing. See AHL Newsletter September 2025 article: <https://www.uoguelph.ca/ahl/new-ahl-bacteriology-transport-media-eswabs>

Virology

If swabs are needed, AHL prefers virus transport medium swabs for virology PCR diagnostic tests. For some testing – e.g., as noted in LabNote 30 Porcine PEDV and PDCoV testing at the AHL – a fecal swab in VTM is the preferred sample rather than feces.

Regular gel-based Bacteriology swabs are unsuitable for PCR testing. Dry swabs moistened with sterile saline in a sterile container can be used but **VTM is preferred.**

BD™ Universal Viral Transport Standard Kit – Fisher Scientific : Catalog # B220531

Or Multitrans™ Collection and Transportation System, Starplex® VWR # CA73270-008



These VTM swabs are also available from AHL for a fee – please email ahlinfo@uoguelph.ca to order.

Tim Pasma Client Service Veterinarian 519-824-4120 ext 54611 tpasma@uoguelph.ca