



ORTHOPOX VIRUS LABORATORY TESTING GUIDANCE

Pre-approval is required for testing. Health care providers must contact their local public health department for consultation and testing approval.

Testing is available at 10 Laboratory Response Network (LRN) Labs in California. Your local health department will refer you to the correct laboratory for testing.

Patients must present firm, well circumscribed, deep-seated, and umbilicated [skin lesions consistent with monkeypox](#) or other orthopoxvirus. Specimens that test positive will be referred to the CDC for additional testing.

Specimen Collection

- Follow personal protection equipment guidance when collecting specimens
- Monkeypox lesions may appear in different stages on different parts of the body. To accommodate the need for both preliminary and confirmatory testing, **collect paired specimens from 2-3 lesions total**, preferably from different body sites.
- Collect at least 2 swabs from the same lesion, using sterile nylon, polyester, or Dacron swabs with plastic or aluminum shaft. Clearly mark paired specimens, e.g., "L elbow swab #1" and "L elbow swab #2".
 - If possible, unroof lesions with sterile needle. Vigorously swab each lesion with **two separate sterile dry swabs**.
 - Place each swab into separate 1.5- or 2-mL screw-capped tube with O-ring or other sterile container
 - Swabs may be submitted dry or in viral transport medium (VTM)
 - Lesion crusts or scabs may be submitted **dry** in separate sterile containers
- Sample, label, and store each specimen separately

Specimen storage and shipping

- Store all specimens at 4°C if shipping within 24-72 hours; store at -20 to -80°C if shipping will be delayed.
- If CDPH VRDL is the LRN lab for your health jurisdiction, one [VRDL General Purpose Specimen Submittal Form](#) must be completed for each specimen container. Handwritten forms or stickers will not be accepted. Email Monkeypox.LRNB@cdph.ca.gov if you have any difficulty accessing this form.
 - Case ID #: **CDC case ID** if already obtained from CDC*
 - Smallpox vaccination history: **date, if administered**
 - Clinical Findings and Symptoms: **date of rash onset**
 - Disease Suspected: **Orthopox**
 - Travel Information: **travel and/or exposure history**

Send submittal forms and patient screening form in advance of delivery to Monkeypox.LRNB@cdph.ca.gov; include hard copy with specimens that have been given approval for testing.

- Email package tracking number to Monkeypox.LRNB@cdph.ca.gov to expedite processing.
- Ship all specimens on cold pack (2°- 8°C) or dry ice within 24 to 72 hours.
- Label outside of box with "VRDL1" to ensure prioritization on arrival.
- Specimens should be packed and shipped as Category B Infectious substances (UN 3373) in accordance with the U.S. DOT's Hazardous Materials Regulations and IATA Dangerous Goods Regulations.
- Ship approved specimens and a hard copy of the completed submittal forms to:

CDPH VRDL
ATTN: Specimen Receiving/VRDL1
850 Marina Bay Parkway
Richmond, CA 94804
Phone: 510-307-8585

For questions about specimen collection, submittal, or shipping, contact the VRDL Medical and Epidemiology Liaisons (MELS) at (510) 307-8585 or Monkeypox.LRNB@cdph.ca.gov.