

**CDC Pertussis and Diphtheria Laboratory  
Meningitis and Vaccine Preventable Diseases Branch,  
Division of Bacterial Diseases,  
National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
1600 Clifton Road, Mailstop D11  
Atlanta, GA 30333**

**Instructions for specimen collection and transport for laboratory testing of *C. diphtheriae***

I. For *culturing*,

**Specimens to collect:** swab of nose (use dacron swab), throat, wounds, and/or piece of membrane

**Transport:** use Amies, Stuart, or other readily available transport medium.

Ship immediately at +4°C so that specimen arrives ASAP after collection.

II. For *direct PCR*,

**Specimens to collect:** same as for culturing and/or pieces of membrane biopsy tissue. Use sterile, dry polyester or dacron swabs [**DO NOT use calcium alginate swab**]. These specimens should be taken at the same time as those for culturing.

**Transport:** place swabs in sterile, dry tube or vial and ship at room temperature or at +4°C. Readily available transport media may also be used.

III. For *toxigenicity testing and identification*,

**Specimen to collect:** fresh, pure isolate from culture.

**Transport:** use agar slants, blood agar slants, or tryptic soy agar slants. Other readily available transport media may also be used. Isolates should be shipped at room temperature.

**NOTE:** PLEASE DO NOT SEND SERUM SPECIMENS TO CDC. WE DO NOT TEST SERA FOR *C. diphtheriae* ANTIBODIES AT CDC.

IV. Accompanying Information and Shipping Instructions

**CALL BEFORE SENDING ANY PACKAGE TO THE CDC.** Please contact Ms. Pam Cassiday at 404-639-1231 so she will be expecting the specimen.

**Provide for EACH isolate/clinical sample:** a DASH form (or equivalent history form). Please fill in all blanks as completely as possible on the front and back of the form. State Health Department Laboratories or other senders should include their phone number and a contact person. Patient ID must include name and/or state ID number, date and source of specimen, lab tests requested, and pertinent results obtained in sender's lab.

**Package labeling:** address to:

**DASH - Attn: Pam Cassiday,**  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,  
1600 Clifton Road, Building 17, Room 2270  
Atlanta, GA 30333.

Write on the outside of the package “**DO NOT expose to extreme temperature.**” Ship by FedEx, Airborne, or UPS so that the package arrives overnight. Do not ship packages to arrive at CDC over the weekend.

**Tracking numbers:** Please call or email Pam Cassiday after the package has shipped and provide the FedEx, Airborne, or UPS tracking number. This helps us locate packages that may get misplaced.

For additional information, please contact:

Ms. Pam Cassiday

Phone 404-639-1231

Email: [PCassiday@cdc.gov](mailto:PCassiday@cdc.gov)

This document can be found on the CDC website at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/diphtheria/dat/downloads/dipcollection.pdf>