



Public Health Division  
Communicable Disease

# County of Santa Cruz

## HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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### MPX Public Health Lab Testing Guidance

Revised 10/31/22

Testing:

**Public Health Lab (PHL) Testing:** Lab testing through PHL requires that both epidemiological and clinical criteria be met AND requires submission of [PHL lab submittal form](#)

Currently County of Santa Cruz is set up to be sending specimens to Santa Clara Public Health Lab (SCPHL). Ordering providers can ship specimens directly to the lab (2220 Moorpark Avenue, 2nd Floor, San Jose, CA 95128) or specimens may be dropped off at the Watsonville Health Center Lab (1430 Freedom Blvd, Suite D) or Santa Cruz Health Center Lab (1080 Emeline Ave) for courier to SCPHL. **If specimens are to be dropped off to Watsonville or Santa Cruz Health Center Lab, the Communicable Disease Unit, and the lab must be notified before sending specimens.**

#### [PPE Guidance:](#)

- Gown
- Gloves
- Eye protection (i.e., goggles or a face shield that covers the front and sides of the face)
- NIOSH-approved particulate respirator equipped with N95 filters or higher

#### Supplies Needed:

- Sterile, synthetic (nylon, polyester, Dacron) swabs. Do not use cotton swabs.
- Viral Transport Media (VTM) tubes or sterile dry specimen tubes (sterile urine collection containers can be used if no available alternative).

#### Specimen Collection:

- Do not clean the lesion with ethanol or any other disinfectant prior to swabbing.
- **Do not unroof or aspirate lesions using sharp instruments during monkeypox lesion specimen collection. It is dangerous and not necessary for diagnostic accuracy.**
- Vigorously swab each lesion with two separate sterile dry swabs.

- Apply firm pressure (generally firm enough so that the swab shaft, if plastic, may bend slightly). This may result in discomfort or slight pain, but it is necessary to obtain adequate DNA.
- If lesion ruptures while swabbing, ensure that swab collects lesion fluid.
- Swipe the swab back and forth on the lesion surface at least 2-3 times then rotate and repeat on the other side of the swab at least 2-3 times.
- Place swabs in appropriate containers (VTM tubes or dry sterile containers).
- Sample, label, and store each lesion separately
- Swab specimens should be stored refrigerated (2-8°C) and ideally frozen (-20°C or lower) within 1 hour.
- Include a [MPX lab submittal form](#) for each specimen, separately bagged

#### Specimen Storage:

- Refrigerate (2-8°C) or freeze (-20°C or lower) specimens within an hour after collection.
- Store refrigerated specimens for up to 7 days and frozen specimens for up to 60 days.
- Refrigerated specimens should be sent within 7 days of collection; frozen specimens should be shipped within 60 days of collection.