

**Virginia Department of Health**  
**Guidelines for *Bordetella pertussis* Testing**  
**(For private providers)**

**Criteria for *Bordetella pertussis* testing in non-outbreak situations:**

- Patients (over the age of 1 year) must have a cough illness lasting at least 10 days, and must have one of the following without other apparent cause as reported by a health professional:
  - paroxysms of coughing OR
  - inspiratory “whoop” OR
  - post-tussive vomiting

**NOTE: Testing is not to be used as a “rule-out” in cases of cough illness not meeting the above criteria.**

**Criteria for *Bordetella pertussis* outbreak testing or testing for patients under the age of 1 year:**

Patient(s) have:

- cough illness lasting at least 7 days OR
- paroxysmal cough of any duration OR
- cough with inspiratory whoop OR
- cough illness associated with apnea in an infant

**\*\*Exceptions to these criteria must have Division of Immunization approval before testing will be performed.**

**NOTE: Division of Immunization, local health department, or DCLS MUST be contacted regarding submission of specimens on patients under the age of 1 year so that additional clinical information can be obtained.**

**Additional Guidelines and Information:**

Testing:

- All specimens will be tested by bacterial culture and PCR, unless prior arrangements have been made with DCLS. Sufficient specimen material on each patient must be collected in order to allow for bacterial culture and PCR testing to be performed. **(Please follow the DCLS Specimen Collection Instructions provided in each collection kit.)**
- Private providers must completely, accurately, and legibly fill out the DCLS *Bordetella pertussis* Request/Report form. Submissions MUST include the clinical description, date of onset, antibiotics administered and dates antibiotics administered. **(Please see DCLS Submission and Reporting guidelines.)**
- **Private providers MUST notify the Division of Immunization, local health department, or DCLS that samples have been collected and are being shipped to DCLS for testing.**
- Upon completion of testing, the results will be called to the submitter (private provider) listed on the Request/Report form, and DCLS will notify the Division of Immunization with positive results who in turn will notify the local health department. A written laboratory report will be sent by mail to the submitter (private provider) and a copy will be sent to the local health department.
- Private providers MAY NOT CHARGE for the laboratory testing service provided by DCLS; however, an office visit and/or a collection fee may be billed.

Kit requests:

- Local health departments should have a limited number of **collection kits and shipping kits** on hand at all times for distributing to private provider for situations meeting the criteria listed above.
- A limited number of collection and shipping kits may be ordered from DCLS by approved facilities not directly associated with the health department.
- Private providers may order collection and shipping kits directly from DCLS by calling (804) 648-4480 ext. 292. Delivery takes 1 to 2 business days when kit requests are received prior to 3:00 PM.

Shipment:

- Ship specimens to DCLS at room temperature (protect from temperature extremes) within 12-24 hours of collection. If specimens cannot be shipped within 24 hours (i.e., due to weekend or holiday), specimens should be kept refrigerated until shipped.
- Shipment of specimens to DCLS can be arranged by contacting the local health department to obtain access to the DCLS courier **OR** by shipping directly to DCLS using the DHL prepaid mailer system. **(Please follow the Packaging and Shipping Instructions provided in each DHL shipping kit.)**

# **Bordetella pertussis Testing at DCLS**

## **Submission and Reporting Guidelines**

(See also Virginia Department of Health, Guidelines for *Bordetella pertussis* Testing for Private Providers)

**When shipping more than 3 specimens contact the DCLS PCR Laboratory, IN ADVANCE, to obtain special instructions. DCLS PCR Laboratory 648-4480 ext. 292**

1. All specimens will be tested by bacterial culture and PCR, unless prior arrangements have been made with DCLS.
  2. After collection of specimen, store swabs and Regan-Lowe Transport Medium at room temperature if specimens are to be shipped to DCLS within 24 hours. If specimens cannot be shipped within 24 hours (i.e., due to weekend or holiday), specimens should be kept refrigerated until shipped.
  3. Ship specimens at room temperature (protect from temperature extremes).
  4. Ship collected specimens by contacting the local health department to obtain access to the DCLS courier **OR** by shipping directly to DCLS using the DHL prepaid mailer system. **(Please follow the Packaging and Shipping Instructions provided in each DHL shipping kit)**
  5. **Completely, accurately, and legibly fill out the DCLS Bordetella pertussis Request/Report form:**
    - a. **DO NOT REMOVE THE TOP COPY OF THE REQUEST/REPORT FORM!** The results will be written on this copy and returned to you. (Make a photo copy of the form if you require a copy for your records.)
    - b. The results will only be called to the submitter listed on the form. **Be sure the telephone number on the form is the number of the SUBMITTER.** Submission of Attending Physician or Patient phone numbers should be avoided!!!!
    - c. If the local health department would like to be called directly with POSITIVE TEST RESULTS, please include on the form next to the "Report Results to" section, the name of the health department and contact person with a phone number of the person to receive the results.
    - d. Include the clinical description, date of onset, antibiotics administered and dates antibiotics administered.
- Upon completion of testing, the results will be called to the submitter and DCLS will notify the Division of Immunization of POSITIVE test results. A written laboratory report will be sent by mail to the submitter and a copy will be sent to the local health department.
  - PCR test results for specimens arriving prior to 9:00 AM Monday through Friday (excluding holidays) are typically available the same day. Culture test results typically require a minimum of 7 days for completion of testing.
  - **Collection kits** may be ordered from DCLS by calling (804) 648-4480 **ext.103 or 104.**
  - **Shipping kits** may be ordered from DCLS by calling (804) 648-4480 **ext. 292.**  
Delivery takes 1 to 2 business days when kit requests are received prior to 3:00 PM.
  - The Regan-Lowe transport medium (tube with brown gel) should be stored refrigerated (4°C) upon receipt and prior to use.
  - **Be sure to routinely check the expiration date on the Regan-Lowe Transport Medium. If media is expired, DISCARD TUBES. Requests for fresh media should be made one week prior to expiration to assure availability of in-date media for specimen collection. Media may be ordered by calling 804-648-4480 ext.103 or 104. Delivery takes 1 to 2 business days when kit requests are received prior to 3:00 PM.**