TESTING FOR COVID-19 WITH A NASOPHARYNGEAL SWAB
WHAT TO EXPECT DURING YOUR TEST

- Nasopharyngeal (NP) swabs are used to collect a sample from the area between your nose and upper throat.
- These swabs can be used to test for viruses (e.g., COVID-19, flu, RSV) and bacteria.

BEFORE YOUR TEST
Tell the tester if you have any of the following.

- Nose or sinus problems
- Recent nose injury or surgery
- Medication to thin your blood
- A blood clotting disorder
- Questions about the test

DURING YOUR TEST

- Keep your mask on until the tester asks you to take it off.
- The tester will use a long, thin, flexible swab to collect the sample.
- You will tilt your head back, if possible.
- The tester will place the swab through one nostril towards the back of your nose.
- The swab will be inside your nose for 10-15 seconds. The tester will turn the swab.
- The tester might place the swab in your other nostril if they do not get enough sample from your first nostril.
- You might feel discomfort during the test and your eyes might tear up, but you should not feel pain. Closing your eyes can help with discomfort.

AFTER YOUR TEST

- You might feel discomfort in your nose. You might have a nosebleed, but this is not common.
- If you were tested because you have COVID-19 symptoms, stay home while you wait for the result. People with a positive test have to stay home (isolate) until it is safe to be around others.
- People with close contact but no COVID-19 symptoms need to stay home (quarantine) until it is safe to be around others. There are some exceptions (i.e., for fully vaccinated or recently recovered people).
- For more resources and information on COVID-19, visit vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/