

Monkey pox Testing Instructions FAQ

All testing must be approved by the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) before testing can be performed at DCLS. Please contact your local Health Department for consultation.

DCLS TESTING:

- Batch testing is performed on Monday, Wednesday and Friday
- Cases deemed high priority by VDH will be tested any day of the week
- **Swabs for specimen collections can be provided by the DCLS Kits Department at (804-648-4480, x104)**
- **Collect 2 (paired) swabs from the same lesion and collect lesion swabs from different body parts/areas**
- Cotton can inhibit PCR test methods, ensure swabs are nylon, polyester or Dacron with plastic, wood or thin aluminum shaft

Test Type(s)	Specimen Type	Additional Information	Storage/Transport Conditions
Real-time PCR: Non-variola Orthopoxvirus assay Varicella Zoster Virus (VZV) assay	<u>PAIRED</u> – Dry, sterile, synthetic swabs (no cotton swabs) of lesions placed in separate dry, sterile tubes Note: indicate area of body swabbed on the specimen containers	No viral or universal transport media (no VTM or UTM)	Refrigerate specimens within 1 hour of collection. Specimens can be stored refrigerated up to 7 days. Note: ship refrigerated on ice packs.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS:

Samples submitted for monkey pox testing **CANNOT** be submitted via Web Vision.

Include a completed DCLS Test Request Form (Qualtrax ID #16857) for each patient to be tested. **It is imperative that the following data accompany specimens submitted:**

- 1) Outbreak code: **RAS989Monkeypox0522**
- 2) Complete submitter information
- 3) Patient name and date of birth
- 4) **Area of body swabbed**
- 5) **Date and Time** of collection
- 6) Symptoms/onset date
- 7) Indicate **monkey pox testing** for “Other” testing

- Package specimens on ice packs and send via routine DCLS courier.
- Additional courier arrangements can be provided, as needed.
- Routine DCLS coolers can be used to submit samples for testing
- **Do not package samples for other DCLS testing in the same cooler containing monkey pox specimens**

RESULTS:

- **Positive** Non-variola Orthopoxvirus results are actionable for monkey pox clinical and epidemiology decisions. **Confirmation at the CDC is not required at this time.**
 - Positive Non-variola Orthopoxvirus samples will be sent in weekly batches to the CDC for monkey pox characterization
 - Average CDC turnaround time to report monkey pox characterization results is 5-7 business days
- **Negative** Non-variola Orthopoxvirus results are final, no additional testing is required.
- **Positive and Negative** VZV results are final, no additional testing is required.
- Verbal reporting of results will be provided to the listed submitter on the day testing is completed
- Reports will be issued within 1-2 business days after test completion

REFERENCES:

DCLS Monkey pox Testing Instructions/FAQ: https://dgs.virginia.gov/globalassets/business-units/dcls/documents/hot-topic-and-updates/monkeypox-testing-instructions_faq-44840-1.pdf

DCLS Test Request Form: <https://dgs.virginia.gov/globalassets/document-center/dcls-forms/dcls-test-request-form-168572.pdf>

Virginia Department of Health (VDH) - Health Department Locator: <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/health-department-locator/>

DCLS POINTS OF CONTACT:

Name	Role	Contact Number
Dr. LaToya Griffin-Thomas	Bioterrorism/Special Pathogens Testing Lead	804-648-4480, x281
Destiny Hairfield	Bioterrorism Response Principal Scientist	804-648-4480, x154
Sean Kelly	Molecular Testing Laboratory Group Manager	804-648-4480, x227
DCLS Kits Department	Specimen Collection Materials	804-648-4480, x104
DCLS Emergency Number	24/7 Mobile Number	804-335-4617

Monkey pox Testing Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. **What is monkey pox virus?** Monkey pox virus is a type of Orthopoxvirus, which also includes vaccinia, cowpox and variola viruses.
2. **Does DCLS perform monkey pox testing?** DCLS, as a Laboratory Response Network (LRN) Advanced Laboratory, is able to perform testing for the identification of the monkey pox virus strain in circulation using real time PCR (amplification) methods. **All testing has to be approved by VDH prior to the submission of specimens to DCLS for testing, and DCLS requires advance notification prior to submission.**
3. **Are the PCR/amplification methods commercially available?** There are now several commercial laboratories that are able to perform testing – Quest, LabCorp, Aegis, Mayo and Sonic Healthcare (<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2022/s0706-monkeypox-labcorp.html>).
4. **What tests are used to detect monkey pox?** Currently, it's the Non-variola Orthopoxvirus real time PCR test. The Non-variola Orthopoxvirus test detects commonly known Orthopoxviruses that infect humans (e.g. vaccinia, cowpox and monkey pox viruses), but **DOES NOT** detect *Variola virus*, the virus that causes smallpox, or Varicella Zoster Virus (VZV), the virus that causes chickenpox.
5. **Does DCLS provide testing for chickenpox?** Testing for Chickenpox (Varicella Zoster Virus) is concurrently performed with the Non-variola Orthopoxvirus PCR test.
6. **What are the acceptable specimen types for monkey pox testing?** The acceptable specimen types are (2) paired **DRY** swabs of the same lesion and collect lesion swabs from different parts/areas of the body. Swabs are then placed in separate sterile, dry tubes.
 - **The collection of PAIRED dry lesion swabs is REQUIRED** to ensure testing at DCLS and additional characterization at the CDC.
 - Swabs should be of a synthetic fiber (nylon, polyester, Dacron) with plastic, wood or thin aluminum shafts. Cotton swabs are not acceptable, as cotton can be inhibitory to PCR test methods.
7. **Does DCLS provide collections swabs for monkey pox testing?** Yes, swabs can be obtained by contacting the DCLS Kits Department at 804-648-4480, x104.
8. **Can swabs be submitted in VTM/UTM?** Swabs in VTM/UTM are **NOT** acceptable for testing.
9. **How should specimens be stored and transported to DCLS?** Specimens should be refrigerated within 1 hour of collection and can be stored refrigerated up to 7 days before testing. Specimens must be

transported to DCLS on ice packs, and can be placed on the routine DCLS courier. Additional courier arrangements can be made, as needed.

10. **Are DCLS test results confirmatory?** Positive real time PCR results are **ACTIONABLE** for monkey pox clinical and epidemiology decisions. Confirmatory testing is no longer required at the CDC. However, swabs from positive cases are forwarded to the CDC for monkey pox characterization (e.g., West African Strain vs Congo Basin strain). The CDC will provide reports of monkey pox characterization results within 5-7 business days from specimen receipt.

If the strain is identified as the Congo Basin strain, Federal Select Agent regulations are applied and reporting to the Federal Select Agent Program (FSAP) will be required.

11. **What are the turnaround times (TATs) for testing at DCLS and the CDC?** DCLS performs testing on high priority cases, as deemed by VDH, any day of the week with test results provided verbally within 5-6 hours from the start of testing. Batch testing is performed on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays for non-priority cases.