



Newfoundland & Labrador

PROVINCIAL PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY NETWORK

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Guidance for Mpox Laboratory Testing

Mpox (previously known as monkeypox) has a broad range of common symptoms/signs that include fever, new rash/lesions in the mouth, genital, and/or peri-anal region, rectal pain, and lymphadenopathy.

In individuals presenting with skin lesions, other compatible clinical presentation, and epidemiological risk factors, diagnostic tests should include Mpox and infections with similar clinical symptoms/ signs (e.g., syphilis, herpes simplex virus, varicella zoster virus, enterovirus infection, molluscum contagiosum, chancroid).

Children with a rash compatible with viral illness (e.g., hand-foot-and-mouth disease from enterovirus infection) do not need Mpox testing without risk factors (e.g., contact with a confirmed case).

The Mpox virus testing is a real-time polymerase chain reaction (PCR) assay. Mpox serology and antigen testing are not currently available or recommended in Canada.

Collection Specimens for Mpox Virus Testing

1. Don appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) including gown, gloves, medical mask, and eye protection.
2. Collect specimens as applicable per the table below.
3. Clearly label at the point of collection using name, health care number, date, time of collection, and source of specimen.

Sample Type		Collection Kit	Store and Shipping Condition	Note
Skin lesions	Swab of lesion	AllTM or VTM or UTM	Immediately after collection, store the swabs @ 2-8°C and ship on ice pack for arrival at the lab within 72 hours from collection. Otherwise, freeze at -20°C or lower and ship frozen on dry ice.	If there are multiple skin lesions, swab 2-3 lesions (using separate swabs) for testing. Lesions should be vigorously swabbed to collect host cells that come off the lesion. Unroofing or aspiration of lesions (or otherwise using sharp instruments for Mpox testing) is not necessary, nor recommended due to the risk for sharps injury. Crusts are to be collected using a forceps or other blunt-tipped sterile instrument.
	Crust	Dry sterile tube/container		
For patients suspected of Mpox infection without skin lesions (e.g., close contact to a confirmed case, presenting with febrile illness but no rash), submit below specimen types together:				
Nasopharyngeal or throat swab*		AllTM or VTM or UTM	Store the swabs @ 2-8°C and ship on ice pack for arrival at the lab within 72 hours from collection. Otherwise, freeze at -20°C or lower and ship frozen on dry ice.	*These two types of specimens are generally NOT recommended.
Serum*		In serum (red-top) or SST (gold-top) tube	Store tubes @ 2-8°C and ship on ice pack	

Packaging and Shipping of Mpox Virus Specimens

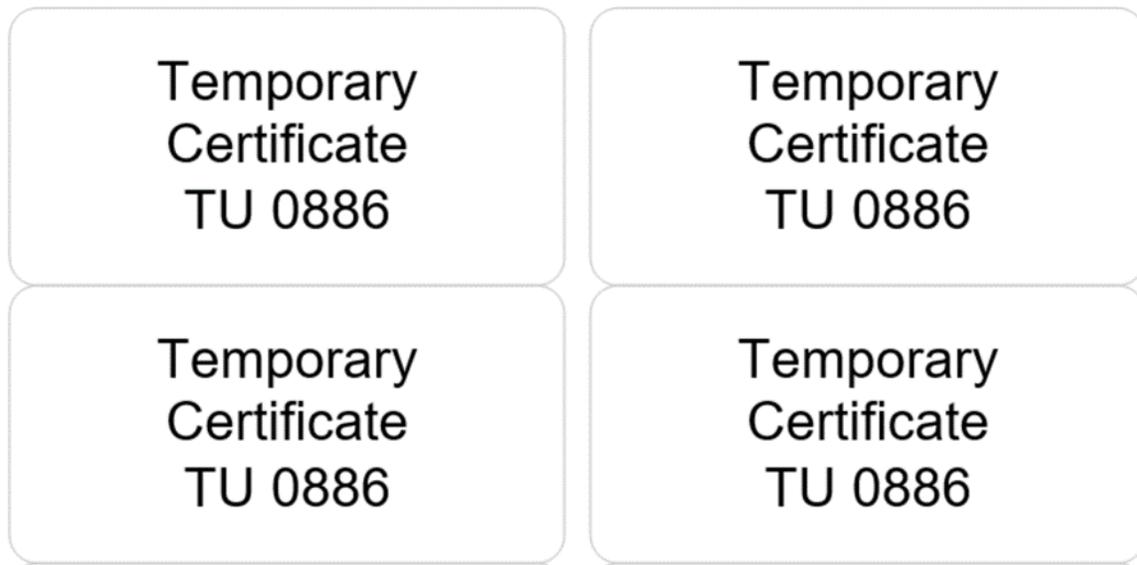
Refer to the above Table for shipping conditions.

Mpox virus is a Risk Group 3 pathogen. Following an assessment carried out by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), Transport Canada issued a temporary certificate allowing the shipment under UN3373 Category B Infectious Substances for patient specimens that may contain Mpox. The temporary certificate number is TU 0886 and applies to road or air transport.

Specimens for Mpox testing require the same packing and transportation as for other microbiological testing specimens using UN3373 Category B (P650 or P620 type packaging) with one extra marking – a label stating “Temporary Certificate -TU 0886” in clear print on contrasting background. Please use the below template for the temporary certificate (TU 0886) labels in addition to all other markings required for shipping under UN3373 Category B Infectious Substances.

Individuals who, package and ship specimens (including the courier) for Mpox testing must hold a transportation of dangerous goods (TDG) certificate. A person without a valid TDG training certificate may be assisted, via videoconference to package the specimens, by a person who is adequately trained and holds a valid TDG certificate.

Please reach out to the microbiologist on-call (MOC) through hospital switchboard if further guidance is required.



Reference:

1. <https://tc.canada.ca/en/dangerous-goods/temporary-certificates/temporary-certificate-tu-08862-monkeypox-samples>
2. https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/mpox/pdf/MPox-AdequateSpecimenCollection_508.pdf



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