

COVID-19 Saliva Test: *Tips for Avoiding a Rejected Sample*

UVA Department of Student Health and Wellness

The lab needs the liquid portion of your saliva to successfully run your test. Your saliva must be clear and not discolored, free of food and mucus, and cannot contain residues such as those from brushing your teeth or smoking. Hydrate earlier in the day by drinking plenty of water up until one hour before your test. Being hydrated in advance will help you produce the more saliva.

IN THE HOUR BEFORE YOUR TEST:

- Do not drink (including water)
- Do not eat
- Do not brush or floss your teeth, or use mouthwash
- Do not chew gum
- Do not wear lip products (chapstick/lipstick)
- Do not use any tobacco products

DURING YOUR TEST:

- Follow these tips for producing enough saliva.
- Pool your drool under your tongue.
- Slide the tip of your tongue along your gums behind your teeth to stimulate your salivary glands and deposit this saliva in the funnel.
- Avoid swishing saliva in your mouth or pulling saliva from the back of your mouth.
- Do not clear your throat, as you want saliva, not mucus.

These are the most common reasons saliva samples are rejected by the lab:

- Visible clumps of food, mucus, or other residues like toothpaste or lipstick
- Too much saliva (you need a 1.0 – 1.5 mL of liquid saliva, not including bubbles, but no more)
- Too little saliva (below 1.0 mL)
- Discoloration

NOTE: Bubbles will be in your saliva sample. As long as the liquid drains to the bottom and you have enough, that is fine. If you notice any of these things like food, mucus, or other residues as you are submitting your sample, ask to start over again with a new tube.

If you have a hard time producing enough saliva for your test, try the following:

- Pool your drool underneath your tongue as you walk or drive to your test site.
- Think about foods you really like to eat.
- Slide the tip of your tongue along your gums behind your teeth to stimulate your salivary glands.
- Think of sour foods, like lemons or tart candy.
- Act like you are chewing food.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?

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