



April 08, 2021

Updated CDC Guidance for Specimen Submission for Surveillance of SARS-CoV-2

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for your continued participation, support, and ongoing public health service in the National SARS-CoV-2 Strain Surveillance (NS3) System. NS3 is providing important national SARS-CoV-2 baseline surveillance information, increasing publicly available viral sequence data, and establishing a representative repository of virus isolates for further characterization.

This update addresses the following topics:

- Variants of interest – We are no longer requesting to be notified of cases and are no longer requesting the submission of specimens to CDC from the following variants for downstream characterization: B.1.1.7, B.1.351, and P.1. Please continue to choose randomly selected SARS-CoV-2 positive specimens for submission to NS3.
- NS3 submission timing – The time from specimen collection to sequence characterization has a large impact on CDC’s ability to quickly detect emerging variants. Therefore, **we continue to request that all jurisdictions submit specimens within 7 days of collection**. If your jurisdiction does not have enough specimens to meet the requested NS3 submission number outlined in Appendix 2, we request that you still submit all available specimens collected as recently as possible (up to 14 days prior to shipment).
- Potential vaccine breakthrough cases – Submission criteria updated to reflect the recent US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) of Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine.

Attached you will find the following updated documents:

- **National SARS-CoV-2 Strain Surveillance (NS3) Submissions to CDC for SARS-CoV-2 Positive Specimens [Appendix 1]**
- **CDC Recommended Number of National SARS-CoV-2 Strain Surveillance (NS3)**

- **Specimens for Weekly Submission to CDC by Jurisdiction [Appendix 2]**
- **Enhanced Surveillance for SARS-CoV-2 [Appendix 3]**
- **National SARS-CoV-2 Strain Surveillance (NS3) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

- For technical guidance, questions about forms or shipments, or sequencing-related questions, please contact the SARS-CoV-2 Sequencing Team at eocevent506@cdc.gov.
- For general questions about the national sequence based surveillance strategy for SARS-CoV-2, please contact the Strain Surveillance and Emerging Variants team at eocevent506@cdc.gov.
- For questions about the SPHERES consortium, or for broader genomics sequencing and bioinformatics support, please contact Duncan MacCannell at fms2@cdc.gov.

Sincerely,



Vivien Dugan, PhD

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Enc: Appendix 1; Appendix 2; Appendix 3, FAQs