

**To:** Clinicians and managers

**From:** Chris Mansell clinical microbiologist

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**Subject:** Lab COVID Testing Pathways

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For information and interest. We change these from time to time as the epidemiologic situation, specimen numbers, staffing and test equipment fluctuate.

Anticipating potential need for testing and sending a swab for the “urgent / next batch” pathway will optimise patient flow.

### **Transport to the lab**

This is often the slowest part of the process. If you need a result within a time frame, it is well worth walking it up to Specimen Reception at Level 3 Waiora bldg. and letting us know it’s urgent.

### **Standard**

Batch testing of 368 samples at a time. These can overlap and we start new batches about 4-6 times a day from 08:00 till 14:00 7 days a week. The run time is 4 hr so results come out from 12:30 till 18:00.

### **Urgent / Next Batch**

Hospital inpatients, staff and others specially requested (eg pre op, transfer to another hospital). Samples need to be flagged on the request form and are put onto the next batch to be started.

### **Rapid / GeneXpert**

One off tests with a run time of 36 or 51 min, depending on whether RSV and Flu testing is also needed, and total lab time of 60 – 90 min. We have limited supplies of these (rationed by Ministry of Health), so they are mostly reserved for either confirming positive results or if population health have an emergency situation. Occasionally a patient gets held up due to a safety requirement before moving them and these can be negotiated by phoning the clinical microbiologist 0272905255. Rapid tests can be requested directly by: ICU staff and the Duty Manager. We have about 5 tests per day available for this.