



## Safe Saliva Collection in the COVID-19 Era

Researchers can successfully recalibrate their saliva collection and handling procedures with these new safety and compliance guidelines for the COVID-19 era. These new saliva collection and handling guidelines are good practice, easy to follow, and will allow investigators to begin or continue their research during this historical period of intense stress and unease. Reach out to Salimetrics [Ask an Expert](#) for help.

1. [Follow Guidance Given by the CDC, NIH and Your University.](#)
2. [Have Participants safely collect at home.](#)
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### #1. Follow Guidance Given by the CDC, NIH and Your University.

The CDC has provided excellent guidance for safe sample handling in the attached link: [Laboratory Biosafety and COVID-19: Questions and Answers](#), which aligns with our Restart Your Saliva Collection Study Steps below. In addition, see our recommendations in the link ["What To Do Before You Collect Samples"](#)

### #2. Have Participants Safely Collect at Home.

Home collection can be done easily and safely by participants without assistance. Salimetrics' protocols and collection devices have easy to follow instructions and are designed for high participant compliance. We offer free [Saliva Collection Workshops](#) (now through webconference) training for researchers and coordinators on how to get the most out of their samples. After collection, have participants:

- Close the cryovial or Saliva Storage Tube properly; seal the sample vial with tape
- Using disinfectant wipes, wipe down the outside of the tubes containing the collected samples
- Place samples into a small, clear [biohazard specimen bag](#) (provided by researchers)
- Place samples in a household freezer

To return samples, simply have participants place samples in a cooler with ice or [gel packs](#) and drop their sample off at their local research site, or a research coordinator can safely pick up the cooler with collected samples from the participant. If you prefer to have participants ship samples back to the research site, follow step #5. Samples should be transported in a cooler with wet or dry ice.

### #3. Can Participants Come Into the Clinic or Lab?

Currently, almost all university labs are restricting participants from coming into the lab. This is good practice; the Salimetrics SalivaLab is currently operating at [BSL-2](#). All Salimetrics laboratory personnel are following PPE guidelines per CDC Biosafety Level 2, and all saliva samples are being processed and tested inside biosafety cabinets. If your team has not been trained and is not [certified at BSL-2](#), we recommend you consider the opportunity of home collection for your study.



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#### **#4. Handle Saliva Samples With a Category B Classification.**

For most of us, saliva has been classified as a non-hazardous sample type. Blood and other clinical samples are primarily classified as Category B and are routinely handled using straightforward handling protocols. When receiving samples at the lab you should:

- Wear PPE, including mask, before you open the cooler
- Open cooler and record whose samples were received
- Check that the biohazard specimen bag or mailer is properly sealed, and the samples are frozen
- If samples appear thawed, place the bag in the freezer for 24 hours before opening
- If samples are frozen, open biohazard specimen bag or mailer and verify that vials are sealed
- Wipe down or spray the outside vials with disinfectant or 70% alcohol
- Place samples into a storage box and place box into -20/-80°C freezer

If you still have questions, call Salimetrics for guidance on how to pick up, transport, process, organize and store collected samples in your lab, and when you are ready, how to prepare your collected samples for shipment to the Salimetrics SalivaLab for testing.

#### **#5. Pack and Ship Your Samples With a Category B Classification.**

Category B samples are routinely transported by the major carriers using straightforward procedures. FedEx is Salimetrics' preferred carrier for sending samples to the Salimetrics SalivaLab, and you should follow FedEx [Procedures for Shipping Category B Samples](#) if shipping via FedEx. This will require placing samples into a secondary, 95kPa compliant container, such as these biohazard [transport bags](#) or [mailers](#). Additional packing materials are readily available and depending on the item, can be purchased online or from Salimetrics. Contact Salimetrics and we can help you through the process.

#### **#6. Test Your Samples at the Salimetrics' SalivaLab.**

Not surprisingly, the Salimetrics SalivaLab tests more saliva samples than any other university lab in the United States. Our process makes it easy for researchers to get accurate results quickly, and you can be sure that our team is safe, and your samples will be taken care of. We want you to succeed.

[Submit Samples](#)

**\*\*\*COVID-19 is a rapidly evolving situation where information can change instantaneously. While every effort was made to maintain and update this content with the latest knowledge, these recommendations may not apply to all researchers in all situations. Therefore, investigators should consult with their Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) department at their respective institutions for additional instructions on the safe handling, storage, and shipping of saliva samples, as well as adhere to any federal, state and local regulations.\*\***