



ALGORITHM for REFERRAL of SAMPLES to UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN (UCD) NATIONAL VIRUS REFERENCE LABORATORY (NVRL) for TESTING for MERS-CoV (Version 2.0 – 02/03/2026)



Please refer to the HPSC MERS-CoV case algorithm to determine whether the patient meets the current clinical case definition for investigation of MERS-CoV.

IF **YES**, (i.e. **does meet** case definition)

IF **NO**, (i.e. **does not meet** case definition)

Contact the clinical team at the NVRL for advice on appropriate specimen collection. **Telephone:**
(Option 1 – Normal Working Hours) 01-716 4401
OR (Option 2 – Out of Hours) 01-716 4050.

Samples should be transported as **Category B substances in UN3733 packaging.**

No MERS-CoV specific investigations required.

Minimum Sample requirements: Combined nose and throat swab and/or one of the following sputum, nasopharyngeal aspirate (NPA), and bronchoalveolar lavage (BAL).

Extended respiratory screen performed which includes a MERS-CoV specific assay.

MERS-CoV Detected

MERS-CoV NOT Detected

Provisional Positive result phoned to requesting clinician and Public Health.

Negative result phoned to requesting clinician* (see Box A).

Refer sample to UKHSA Respiratory Virus Unit (RVU) Colindale for further confirmatory testing.

Final report issued

A: Additional considerations

Repeat testing should be performed in **patients with a high index of suspicion of MERS-CoV** infection with an initial negative result from an upper respiratory tract sample.