

NC State Veterinary Cardiac Genetics Laboratory

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE OF THE CHEEK SWAB TEST KIT

NOTE: It is IMPORTANT THAT FOOD PARTICLES ARE NOT INCLUDED with the cheek and gum cells sampled from the mouth. Sample dogs/cats when no food particles are present in the mouth. In the morning before eating is ideal. Otherwise, wait for at least 30 minutes after eating for the food particles to clear out of the mouth, and rinse out the cat/dog's mouth with water before obtaining a sample.

A. Label the Brushes

Use two brushes for each dog/cat. Label the paper backing of each brush package with the dog/cat's name, the owner's first and last name (or name of the Veterinary Hospital), and the requested test using a pen or permanent marker.

B. Taking the Samples

1. Open the swab package at the handle end (NOT the collection tip end) only a few inches. Do not peel open the swab package entirely, as you will need to reinsert the swab sample back into this packaging - completely opening the packaging may increase the risk of your swab sample falling out of its packaging during transit.
2. Remove the brush from the package. Do not allow the tip of the swab to touch anything other than the inside of the dog/cat's mouth and the inside of the packaging.
3. Hold the brush handle between your thumb and forefinger. Roll the inner surface of the upper lip to the outside by inserting a finger in the corner of the mouth and pulling the lip upwards. Place the bristles of the brush on the inner surface of the lip. Release the lip, leaving the brush inside the mouth and steady the dog/cat's muzzle by circling the nose with one hand, gently keeping the dog/cat's mouth closed. Move the brush back and forth for a short distance in the space between the lip and gum, twirling the brush around with your thumb and forefinger as it is moved back and forth. Do not push the tip of the brush into the soft tissues of the mouth. The side bristles will be brushing on the surface of the gums and inner side of the lip.
4. Continue for 20-30 seconds (about 20 to 30 back and forth motions) using the same pressure you would use to brush your teeth. Repeat sampling on the other side of the mouth using the remaining brush. If multiple animals are being sampled, wash your hands between each sampling.
5. After collecting the sample, the brush should look different than the unused brush. The bristles may be darker in dogs/cats with pigmented gums or you may see a light film on the brush bristles. An unused brush is shown on the left, and a used brush on the right.



Tips

A few swipes will not get enough cheek cells to run the test! Be sure to brush long enough.

C. Repackaging the samples

Let the brush air dry in a clean place for a few hours or overnight. Carefully reinsert the swab into the packaging so that the tip faces away from the opening. Don't forget to label the paper backing of each brush package with the dog/cat's name, owner first and last name, and requested test. Use a piece of tape to help keep the package closed, but do not seal tightly.

D. Returning the Samples

We have transitioned to an online submission portal!

Please go to the link below and fill out the online submission form to submit your samples for genetic testing. Payment and mailing instructions will be provided to you as you fill out this form.

<https://cvm.ncsu.edu/nc-state-vet-hospital/small-animal/genetics/submit-samples-for-genetic-testing/>