Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

How to Collect a DNA Sample Using a Cheek Swab for Your Genetic Test

This information explains how to collect a DNA sample using a cheek swab for your genetic test.

About your buccal (cheek) sample

Your healthcare provider needs your DNA sample for your genetic test (a test to look at your genes). You will collect your DNA sample by using an oral swab to rub the inside of your cheek. Then your healthcare provider will send it to our lab.

Your buccal (cheek) sample collection kit

Your healthcare provider or a staff member will give you a buccal (cheek) sample collection kit (see Figure 1). The kit has:



Figure 1.

- 1 Q tip (WhatMan Omni Swab©)
- 1 10 milliter (ml) blue top screw cap tube

A staff member will put on gloves, so they don't get any of their own DNA onto the tube and Whatman Omni Swab as they hand it you. The tube will have your patient label on it. Your patient label will include your name, your medical record number (MRN) and the name of your healthcare provider.

When you get your kit, you should wash your hands and find a clean flat surface to use as your work area.

Instructions for collecting your buccal (cheek) sample

1. Open the tube. Set the cap down with the inside facing up. Set the tube down so it's standing upright.
2. Open the OmniSwab package from the opposite end of the swab tip. Peel the package back and grab the stick in the middle with your fingers to remove the swab from the package. It's important that you don't touch the end of the swab stick so you don't spread any of your DNA there.
3. Place the swab tip in your mouth and rub the side of your inner cheek about 6 times.
4. Take the swab out of your mouth.

5. Place the swab tip into the opened tube. Push on the back end of the swab stick so the swab tip comes off. Make sure if falls into the tube. Put the cap back on the tube.
6. Your healthcare provider will take your sample and send it to the lab.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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