Nasal Swab Collection for MRSA testing and Staph aureus culture

Purpose: Nasal staph aureus testing is intended to aid in the prevention and control of staph infections in healthcare settings. Both methicillin sensitive (MSSA) and resistant (MRSA) strains can cause negative outcomes in the hospitalized and post surgical patient.

Supplies: Gloves
BBL CultureSwab Collection and Transport System (red cap), item # 17737

Test Codes: MRSAS, MRSAP, CSA. If in doubt as to which test should be ordered, Microbiology can enter the order.

Procedure:
1. **Do NOT** have patient blow nose to remove excessive nasal secretion. (procedure revised 2/17/12).
2. Open the swab package by peeling back the outer packaging.
3. Discard white cap from the transport tube. (Fig. 1)
4. Ask the patient to tilt his/her head back. Insert paired swabs approximately 1-2 cm (1/2 to ¾ inches) into each nostril.
5. Rotate the swabs against the inside of the nostril for 3 seconds. Apply slight pressure with a finger on the outside of the nose to help assure good contact between the swab and the inside of the nose. (Fig. 2)
6. Repeat for the second nostril using same paired swab, trying not to touch anything but the inside of the nose.
7. Place the swabs into the plastic transport tube. The swabs should go all the way into the tube until they rest on top of the sponge at the bottom of the tube. Make sure the red cap is seated tightly.
   **NOTE:** The swabs should stay attached to the cap at all times.
8. Label the plastic transport tube with patient name, date of birth or medical record number, date and time of collection, and **specimen source (nasal).**
9. Store and transport swab specimen at room temperature (15-30ºC) if it will be processed within 24 hours, otherwise store swab at 2-8ºC (refrigerate). The swab specimen is stable up to 5 days when stored at 2-8ºC.
10. Results are available in 2 days for culture testing, same day for PCR testing.

Fig 1  
Fig 2  
Fig 3