

Saliva collection for clinical studies

In order to examine DNA, hormones and other human material, we often collect saliva from participants. Due to the Corona crisis, studies that were meant to use these procedures have been cancelled or postponed for the past months. As from now, the Faculty of Social Sciences wants to conduct these studies again.

In order to facilitate this, several meetings have taken place with board members of the LUMC and the faculties of Social Sciences and Humanities in order to assess the possibility of safely restarting saliva research. Although the Corona crisis seems to slowly come to an end, it is still possible that despite good triage, infected participants and patients without symptoms are invited to participate in saliva studies. Taking all this into account, we have come up with the current protocol for conducting these studies.

This protocol is an addition to the [Saliva collection protocol](#) and has been based on the protocol by the Federation of Medical Specialists (FMS). This FMS protocol does not consider saliva collection to increase the risk of aerosol forming. Therefore, the researcher does not need extra protection apart from the mandatory disposable gloves.

Before collecting saliva

- All participants will have to respond to the *Questionnaire COVID-19 screening Leiden University* Questionnaire, unless other rules apply on your location.

Collecting Saliva

- Preferably, do not use systems for the collection of saliva in which saliva has to be “spat into a jar or tube”. However, if saliva has already been decreased in a certain way within the same study in the past, it is recommended to continue to use the same methodology and materials as before.
- Saliva collection can be done at every research location;
- If possible, a Perspex screen is put between the participant and the researcher. This screen also provides sideways protection. During saliva collection, the researcher can give the participant specific instructions;
- Participants will collect the saliva **themselves**. They do this according to the method instructed by the researcher;
- After collection, the participant deposits the sample in a container and seals this container.
- Participants disinfect the outside of the container using an Incidin Oxywipe and place the container in a rack or tray;
- If the participant cannot do this him-/herself (e.g. young children), the researcher will collect the saliva according to the Saliva collection protocol;
- The researcher will disinfect his/her hands if the participant has touched other objects and/or when the participant leaves the lab.

After collecting Saliva

- Using a Wecoline cloth, the researcher will clean the table surface, the Perspex screen and all other items and objects that might have come into contact with saliva;
- The saliva samples will be stored in the assigned freezer as soon as possible;
- Disinfect the sample containers before storing them in the freezer. Also state clearly (both on the outside of the freezer as well as inside the freezer) that this saliva was decreased during the COVID-19 period;

- The researcher will disinfect his-/her hands after storing the rack in the freezer (or in a portable cooler bag if immediate storage is not possible);
- The aforementioned measures that were taken during the COVID-19 period need to be clearly stated in the analysis request;
- The carrier must be notified that the shipment may contain COVID-19 contaminated material.