



Collection of a self-taken vaginal swab

11 May 2020

Important note

This information leaflet is for complainants of sexual assault only and should not be used when considering samples from suspects.

Collection of a self-taken vaginal swab

Self-taken swabs are not suitable for everyone.

The police may ask you to take these, but before you do so, you should (must) have a discussion with a forensic doctor or nurse.

Please do not open any of the packets until you have read this information.

If you are not sure what to do ask the forensic doctor or nurse to whom you have been speaking.

If you have been asked to take a swab from the vagina and the back passage (anal swab), it does not matter which swab you take first, **BUT, you must carefully remove the gloves and wash your hands, before taking the other swab and make sure that the vaginal swab goes into the bag labelled vaginal swab and the anal swab goes into the bag labelled anal swab.**

In the pack provided to you, you will find a bag labelled 'vaginal swab'. There is one swab.

The swab you have in the bag may look different to the ones in the pictures below. Please do not worry as this swab has been carefully prepared for you to use, by a forensic doctor or nurse.

These instructions tell you how to collect a vaginal swab.



What is a self taken vaginal swab?

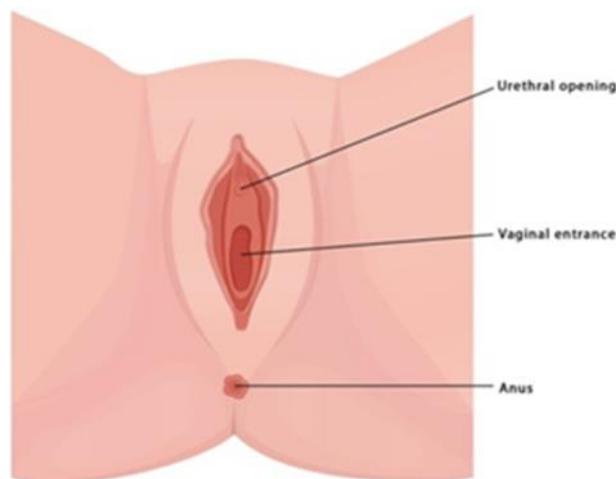
This is a vaginal swab taken by the patients themselves rather than by a forensic doctor or nurse.

What is the purpose of the vaginal swab?

The purpose of this swab is to collect DNA evidence.

Where is the swab taken from?

The swab should be taken from just inside the vagina. If this is too uncomfortable then take it from the area just outside the vaginal entrance, between the lips of the vagina.



Before you collect the sample

Wash your hands using soap and warm water, rinse and dry. Undress to expose the vaginal area and get yourself into a comfortable position.

Put on 2 pairs of gloves that will have been supplied to you.

If you touch or drop the swab tip or the swab is laid down, discard the swab and use another one (there will be some spare swabs provided)

Obtaining a self-taken vaginal swab

Follow the process on page 2 of this document

Where is my sample tested?

The sample will be taken and stored by the police. They will arrange for the sample to be tested dependent on the details of the case.

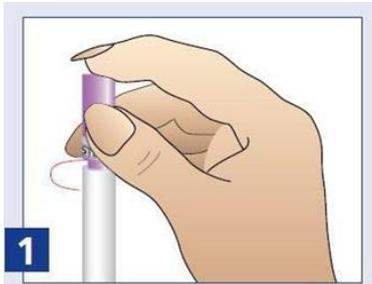
How do I get my results?

The results will go directly to the police



How to collect a vaginal swab

Gloves should be worn throughout



1. Wearing two pairs of gloves on each hand. twist the cap to break the seal

Do not use if the seal was already broken or damaged.

Holding only the stopper, pull the swab out of the case. Be careful to not allow the cotton end to touch anything except the area that you are swabbing.

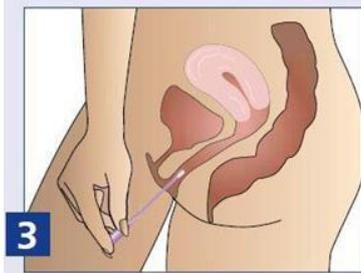


Insert vaginal swab like a tampon

2. Take the vaginal swab

Hold the swab by the stopper so the tip is pointing towards you. With your other hand, gently part the lips around the entrance to the vagina.

Insert the tip of the swab into the vaginal opening. Point the tip towards your lower back and relax your muscles.



Rotate the swab 3 or 4 times

3. Gently slide the swab no more than 4 cms into the vagina. If the swab does not slide easily, gently rotate the swab as you push. Make sure the swab touches the walls of the vagina so that moisture is absorbed by the swab. To do this rotate the swab for 3 or 4 times whilst slowly counting to ten.

If this is too uncomfortable then take it from the area just outside the vaginal entrance, between the lips of the vagina. In some cases the Forensic Doctor or Nurse will advise you to only take a swab from the area outside the vagina



Take the swab out trying not to touch anywhere else with it

4. Withdraw the swab trying not to touch anywhere else with it.



Place the swab in the tube and cap securely

5. Place the swab in the tube and cap it securely.
Place the labelled swab in the sample bag it came from

6. Remove the gloves and wash your hands

If you have been asked to take other swabs, for example anal swabs, make sure that your hands are washed and dried before putting on fresh pairs of gloves.