Collecting an Eschar Swab
NCEZID - National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases

1. Cleanse the eschar with a standard disinfectant solution. Use sterile saline to remove remaining disinfectant.

2. Use sterile tweezers to lift the scab partially or completely. It is not necessary to remove the scab entirely if it is firmly attached. If removed, place the scab into an empty, sterile specimen container.

3. Use a dry, sterile cotton swab to sample the ulcerated area. Rotate the swab vigorously on ulcerated area while applying steady, gentle pressure.

4. Place the swab in a sterile specimen container. Swab can be placed in the same sterile specimen container as the scab.

5. Ship specimen immediately overnight on cold packs or freeze and ship on dry ice.

For more information on eschar-associated rickettsioses, visit https://www.cdc.gov/otherspottedfever/healthcare-providers/index.html.

For questions, please call the Rickettsial Zoonoses Branch at (404) 639-1075 or email rzbeptidag@cdc.gov.