Collecting cheek and fecal cells from your dog(s):

1. You have received two swab kits (one to sample the mouth and the other to sample fecal material).
2. Each swab is identical and includes a swab paired with a tube containing a clear buffer/preservative solution labeled DNA/RNA Shield.
3. Label each tube with the dog’s name in ink (please print clearly). On one tube, please also write the word “mouth” and on the other tube, label it with “fecal”.
4. When you open the swabs, remove the swab by the shaft (do not touch the swab end on any surface or with your fingers). To avoid contaminating the swab with human skin cells, do not touch the swab cotton end; please hold the swab by the stick/shaft.
5. Just before using the swab, open the reagent tube and carefully sit it upright on a flat surface in preparation for receiving the swab.
6. **Warning**: Do not insert the swab into the DNA/RNA Shield solution in the collection tube before swabbing the dog’s mouth. Do NOT drink, touch, or remove the DNA/RNA Shield solution. The DNA/RNA Shield solution can be harmful if ingested.
7. Collect cheek cells:
   a) The dog must not have consumed food/water 30 minutes prior to sample collection to ensure a clean mouth.
   b) Rub/rotate the swab’s cotton ball end against the inside part of the cheek at least 10 times. Apply gentle pressure to ensure contact with the inside part of the cheek.
   c) Place the cotton swab into the clear solution.
   d) Break off the end of the shaft to allow the tube’s screw top to be securely fastened. Close the lid tightly. See the packaging for pictorial instructions.
8. Collect fecal material:
   a) Use the second swab+tube to sample fecal material.
   b) Stick the swab end directly into the fecal/stool pile. Twist the swab 5-7 times.
   c) Place the cotton swab into the clear solution.
   d) Break off the end of the shaft to allow the tube’s screw top to be securely fastened. Close the lid tightly. See the packaging for pictorial instructions.
9. Place both tubes (each now contain the used swab) into a single ziplock bag and seal the bag. Store and ship the swab/solution tubes at room temperature in the ziplock bag as soon as possible.

Return the cheek and fecal swabs to Princeton University:

The swab/buffer tubes are stable at room temperature! Do not refrigerate or freeze. Ship at ambient temperature. Please use standard Post Office mail to return the swab to Bridgett vonHoldt (vonHoldt@princeton.edu), Princeton University, 106A Guyot Hall, Princeton, NJ 08544. Express or overnight mail is not needed.