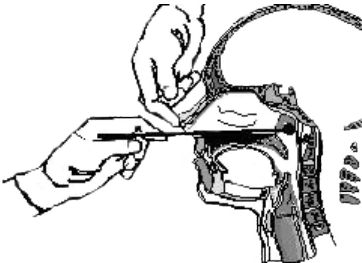


Instructions for Collection of Specimens for Identification of Influenza and Other Viral Respiratory Agents

Specimen Collection Criteria:

- a) Specimen collection must be within 72 hours of onset
 - b) Patient has fever (temperature > 100° F oral or equivalent) **AND**
 - c) Patient has cough or sore throat (in the absence of a known cause)
 - d) See the priority identification box on the front of the form for requirements for PCR testing.
1. Always store VTM (viral transport medium) at 4° C. Make sure the VTM is a clear pink solution before use. (Discard if it is cloudy or turns yellow.)
 2. Use only the sterile swabs provided. (Do **NOT** use calcium alginate swabs or swabs with wooden shafts.)
 3. Collect **TWO** specimens. The specimens may be from **ANY** of the following sites:
 - a) Nasopharyngeal swab (Preferred specimen)
 - b) Nasal swab: Insert a swab into nostril and twirl gently
 - c) Nasal aspirate / nasal wash
 - d) Throat swab
 - e) Sputum
 4. Nasopharyngeal swab procedure (see diagram for appropriate positioning):
 - a) Remove swabs from their wrappers and moisten one with VTM.
 - b) Immobilize patient's head and insert swab into a nostril back to the posterior nares.
 - c) Leave the swab in place for up to 10 seconds. If resistance is encountered during insertion of the swab, remove it and attempt insertion on the opposite nostril.
 - d) Remove the swab slowly.
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5. Break the swab shafts to permit closure of vial cap and make sure screw caps are securely fastened and taped with parafilm or masking tape to avoid leakage. Write the patient's **name**, **date** of specimen collection, and **specimen type** (source of specimen) on both tubes. Refrigerate tubes immediately.
 6. Seal both specimen tubes in the zip-lock bag with biohazard symbol. Complete enclosed "Specimen Submission Form" and place in the outside pouch of the bag **OR** staple or tape the form to the outside of the zip-lock bag.
 7. Submit specimens to the diagnostic laboratory that the specimen collection kit was obtained from.

If you have any questions regarding the Influenza Surveillance Program or submission of specimens, please contact the Hawaii State Department of Health, Disease Investigation Branch at 586-4586.