

Specimen Collection Supplies

1. Specimen Tube
 - a. Screw-capped 15 mL tube with 3 mL of viral transport medium (VTM)
 - b. Store at room temperature until use
2. Two sterile flock-tipped plastic-shaft swabs: one minitip (NP) swab and one standard swab

**Cotton-tipped swab with wooden shafts are
NOT acceptable and will be rejected.**
3. Sealable, multi-compartment plastic biohazard bag with absorbent sheets
4. Specimen submission form with clear plastic bag
5. Foam packing insert with cardboard mailer
6. Cold pack – Upon receipt of the kit, freeze the cold pack and keep frozen until packaging is completed.
7. Address labels for shipment

Specimen Collection Instructions

- Specimens should be collected within 1-4 days of the onset of symptoms.
- All respiratory swabs collected from the same patient should be inserted into the same tube of VTM, one tube per patient.
- Refrigerate specimens until ready for packaging and shipping. If specimen will not arrive at the Bureau of Laboratories within 24-48 hours of collection, freeze specimens and package to maintain as frozen.

Nasopharyngeal (NP) Swab (preferred specimen)

1. Pass the NP swab through the nares. (see diagram below)
2. Resistance will be met and this will confirm contact with the nasopharynx.
3. Rub the swab tip several times across the mucosal surface. This will loosen and collect cellular material.

4. Allow a time of contact of up to 30 seconds.
5. Withdraw the swab and place in the viral transport media. Make sure liquid medium covers the swab tip.
6. Break or cut the end of the swab and screw the vial lid on tightly.

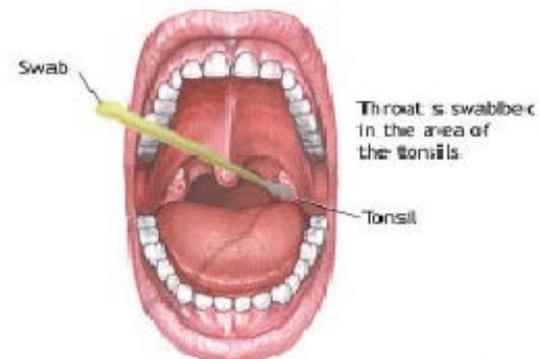


Nasal Swab

1. Pass sterile swab into nostril parallel to palate.
2. Leave in place for several seconds.
3. Withdraw swab slowly with rotating motion.
4. Repeat the process with same swab on other nostril.
5. Place the swab into transport media. Make sure liquid medium covers the swab tip.
6. Break or cut the end of the swab.
7. Screw the vial lid on tightly.

Oropharyngeal (OP) or Throat Swab

1. Using plastic handled swab, vigorously swab both the tonsils and the posterior pharynx. (see diagram at right)
2. Place swab into the transport media. Make sure liquid medium covers the swab tip.
3. Break or cut the end of the swab.
4. Screw the vial lid on tightly.



Specimen Packaging Instructions

1. Label the container with patient's name and the collection date.
2. This information must appear on **BOTH** the specimen and the specimen submission form or testing will **NOT** be performed.
3. Place the transport tube in one of the compartments of the biohazard bag. One tube per compartment. Up to five tubes per multi-component biohazard bag
4. Seal the bag and refrigerate specimen at 2-8° C until shipping.
5. Place the biohazard bag containing the specimen into the foam box.
6. Add the **FROZEN** cold pack and close the foam box.
7. Place foam box into the cardboard mailer.
8. Put the completed specimen submission form in the clear plastic bag.
9. Seal the bag and place it between the form box and cardboard mailer.
10. Close the outer mailer and seal it with tape.

Specimen Submission Form Completion

Enter the following information and FI number if applicable:

- Patient Name (Last, First, Middle)
- Address
- City, including Zip Code
- County
- Date of Birth
- Sex
- Date of Onset
- Specific agent suspected
- Source of Specimen: NP Swab (or appropriate description)
- Date Collected
- Laboratory examination requested
- Submitter name, address, and phone number

Shipping Instructions

1. Ship the specimen as soon as possible after collection (within 48 hours).
2. Refrigerate specimens if they will not be shipped immediately. If specimen will not arrive at the Bureau of Laboratories within 24-48 hours of collection, freeze specimen and ship frozen the next business day
3. Specimen **MUST** be kept cold until it reaches the laboratory.
4. Follow the Influenza Shipping Guidelines for the use of Quick Courier at 800-355-1004.

Quick Courier Direction for Shipping

1. Package the specimen appropriately.
2. Address package: **Pennsylvania Department of Health
Bureau of Laboratories
110 Pickering Way
Exton, PA 19341-1310**
3. Call Quick Courier at 800-355-1004 to request pickup of a "*Flu Pickup Account #PA-BOLFL*" package for next day delivery to the *Bureau of Laboratories (Lionville Laboratory)*.
4. A dispatcher will pick up the specimen from the public health center and deliver it to the Bureau of Laboratories the next business day.

**Calls to Quick Courier must be made by 12 noon for
delivery the next business day.**

Specimens for Influenza Testing

Do not ship specimens for influenza testing on Fridays, weekends, days before a holiday or on holidays, unless approved by Maria Strohecker/Bureau of Laboratories 484-870-6289 or mstrohecke@pa.gov

If the specimen will not arrive at the Bureau of Laboratories within 24-48 hours of collection, freeze the specimen and ship it frozen the next business day.