



Laboratory Testing Information

Viral **NP (nasopharyngeal) swab** test kits may be ordered at no cost from BCCDC. Order forms and lab requisition forms may be downloaded from the LML labs Health Professionals Test Requisition webpage. The order form link is at the bottom of the page labelled “Diagnostic”.

<http://lmlabs.phsa.ca/Documents/BCPHL%20Order%20Form%20Updated%20Aug%202017.pdf>

Viral **NP** swabs should be ordered for individual influenza testing, **and for** influenza like illness outbreaks, **NP 6 pack kits are available for facilities**. The fax number to submit orders is on the form.

During respiratory season, specimens **are tested** for influenza virus by nucleic acid testing **and certain age groups are also tested using a molecular multiplex panel**. When the respiratory **multiplex** virus panel is used, physicians may receive positive lab reports for other common, non-influenza respiratory pathogens, even when only influenza testing was initially ordered. Both the Island Health and LML provincial lab is offering this extended service to physicians to assist with clinical decisions, as well as contribute to community disease surveillance.

Specimen collection:

Collect specimens from patients presenting with influenza-like illness within 72 hours of onset of symptoms. Specimens from severely ill patients and children are acceptable after 72 hours of symptom onset.

Nasopharyngeal swabs are preferred but lower respiratory tract specimens are acceptable as well. To collect an NP swab, incline the patient's head as required and insert the dacron swab along the base of the nasal cavity to a depth of 2-4 cm into the nostril. Rotate the NP swab several times inside the nostril, remove the NP swab and place into supplied viral transport media. Dry swabs or routine swabs without viral transport media cannot be processed for influenza. Remember to perform hand hygiene before and after sampling, and wear a fluid resistant mask.

Updated: September 2018