

ILI Outbreak Management

COLLECTION OF NASOPHARYNGEAL SWABS

- Island Health Microbiology Laboratory will send an outbreak kit with Nasopharyngeal (NP) swabs on request.
- Additional NP swabs are available as needed from the Microbiology Laboratory at RJH, NRGH, CRH, and Laboratories at CDH, VGH, SPH, LMH, WCGH, CRGH and CVH.
- Please ensure that you include the facility and relevant outbreak unit on the requisition; This will ensure the test is done promptly and correctly reported.
- Specimen results directly impact outbreak management strategies for outbreaks of ILI.

How to collect a nasopharyngeal swab for influenza testing:

- Collect specimens from patient presenting with Influenza like illness within 72 hours of onset of symptoms.
- Routine diagnostic swabs in transport media are NOT acceptable.
- Calcium alginate swabs used for Bordetella pertussis are NOT acceptable. Residues present in the swabs may inhibit PCR assays.
- Before performing any nasopharyngeal swab, ensure there are no contraindications (e.g. facial surgery or trauma).

SUPPLIES


An 'Influenza Outbreak kit' from the Laboratory contains:

- Flocked viral swab with Viral transport media (COPAN Red Top)
- VIHA inpatient Microbiology requisition
- Instructions for sample collection

ILI Outbreak Management (continued)

Infection Prevention & Control Best Practice Guidelines

PROCEDURE FOR NASOPHARYNGEAL SWABS

| Procedure | |
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| 1 | Explain procedure to the patient. |
| 2 | Protect yourself (fluid resistant mask with visor, gloves and disposable gown). |
| 3 | <p>If the patient has a lot of mucous, ask them to use a tissue to gently blow their nose prior to specimen collection.</p> <p>· Influenza is found in the cells that line the nasopharynx, not in the mu-</p> |
| 4 | <p>With head supported, push the tip of the nose upwards. Insert the swab backwards and downwards to a depth of 2-4 cm into one nostril. Rotate the swab gently for 5-10seconds.</p>  |
| 5 | Place the swab into the virus transport media, snap off the top of swab, tighten |
| 6 | Label container with sample type and a minimum of two patient identifiers: First/Last Name, DOB, PHN, or use patient label with bar graph demographics |
| 7 | Instruct the patient to use a tissue to contain cough and mucous. |

References:

- BCCDC H1N1 Specimen Collection Guidelines.
- Vancouver Coastal Health, Influenza-like Illness Outbreak – Specimen Collection.

ILI Outbreak Management (continued)

TRANSPORT OF NASOPHARYNGEAL SWABS

- The lab is responsible for delivering kits to facilities. Facilities are responsible for delivery of collected swabs to the lab.
- Transport can be arranged via courier, lab outreach staff, facility staff, or taxi. Hub labs include CRGH, CVH, NRGH, RJH, and VGH.
- Island Health Microbiology Lab runs ILI tests once a day at 11AM. Specimens received after that time will be processed the next day.
- The lab will provide instruction about the process on request.



Specimens should be transported to the laboratory as soon as possible, following established methods for transporting STAT lab specimens (i.e. with a cold pack).

Avoid storing them in a car any longer than necessary.

- Continue collecting specimens from newly symptomatic patients/residents/clients until the laboratory confirms the organism or you are instructed to stop.