



Influenza Specimen Submission to MDH-PHL

Appropriate specimen types

- Acceptable specimens include: nasopharyngeal swab, nasal swab, nasal wash/aspirate, throat swab, combined nasal/oropharyngeal swab, and viral culture isolates.
- **Please do not submit residual specimen from rapid antigen testing.** Submit only the original specimen in appropriate transport media.
- **Specimens may be submitted in viral transport media, universal transport media, saline, or liquid Amies.**
- **Specimens must be received within 3 days of collection or stored and shipped frozen. Please note on the submission form if specimens have been stored frozen.**

*ILI is defined as **fever (measured or subjective) and cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing** in the absence of a known disease other than influenza.

For patients admitted with ILI* **or** clinical suspicion of influenza who also have evidence of **pneumonia** or **other lower respiratory disease** submit one upper respiratory specimen AND one lower respiratory specimen per patient. DO NOT perform a procedure such as bronchoscopy solely for the purpose of collecting a specimen for testing by MDH-PHL.

Submit an **upper respiratory specimen** in addition to one or more of the following:

- Bronchoalveolar lavage (BAL)
- Tracheal aspirate (if intubated)
- Bronchial wash

Specimen Transport

- Place swab in transport media (VTM; e.g. M4, M5, Hanks, universal transport medium, saline, liquid Amies) for transport to MDH-PHL.
- Ship specimens to MDH-PHL by an overnight delivery service.
 - Specimens must be received within 3 days of collection, or stored and shipped frozen.
 - For refrigerated specimens, use cold packs to keep specimens at 4 degrees C. Put in a container that will maintain refrigeration temperature throughout transport.
 - For frozen specimens, use dry ice to keep specimens frozen. Put in a container that will maintain frozen temperature throughout transport.
 - **Note:** It is the responsibility of the submitting laboratory to determine the appropriate packaging and shipping for patient specimens and culture isolates. See [U.S. Department of Transportation Regulations \(http://phmsa.dot.gov/hazmat/regs\)](http://phmsa.dot.gov/hazmat/regs) for more information. Attention: Non-MDH link
- Ship to:
Minnesota Department of Health - Public Health Laboratory
Attn: Biological Accessioning
601 Robert St. N
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-2531

For additional information please refer to the link below:

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/flu/hcp/lab.html>