



SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY Public Health Laboratory

Phone: (805) 781-5507 Fax: (805) 781-1023 www.sloPublicHealth.org/lab

SPECIMEN COLLECTION & TRANSPORT INSTRUCTIONS

Influenza Virus

Specimen Collection Procedure for Influenza Real-time RT PCR

I. Specimen Collection:

Collect appropriate specimens from symptomatic patients using accepted sample collection methods. Collect specimen as soon as possible after illness onset. All respiratory swab specimens should be placed into M4 or equivalent viral transport medium (VTM).

A. Preferred Specimens:

- **Nasopharyngeal swab** or **nasal aspirate** or a combined **nasopharyngeal swab with an oropharyngeal swab** (polyester or Dacron® tip swabs with an aluminum or plastic shaft) and place swabs in viral transport media (M4 or equivalent, VTM).

B. Acceptable Specimens:

- If the above specimens cannot be collected, a **nasal swab** or **oropharyngeal swab** is acceptable.
- **Bronchoalveolar Lavage** (immediately placed in viral transport media (M4 or equivalent, VTM).
- **Endotracheal Aspirates** (immediately placed in viral transport media (M4 or equivalent, VTM).
- **Sputum** (immediately placed in viral transport media (M4 or equivalent, VTM).

II. Rejection Criteria:

- Swabs with calcium alginate or cotton tips and wooden shafts.
- Specimens that have not been refrigerated or frozen
- Incomplete specimen labeling/documentation
- Insufficient specimen volume
- Tissue specimens are not recommended at this time.

III. Collection of specimen:

- Collect acceptable respiratory specimens listed above.
- Specimens must be placed in sterile viral transport media.
- Fill out the enclosed San Luis Obispo Public Health Laboratory Requisition.
- Put the patient's full name and date of collection on specimen.

IV. Storage of Clinical Specimens:

Respiratory specimens must be refrigerated at 4°C until they can be sent to the laboratory. Respiratory specimens must be frozen if not tested within 4 days of collection.

V. Shipping of Clinical Specimens:

Clinical specimens should be shipped on wet ice or cold packs in appropriate packaging.

Transport

1. Transport specimen on ice or refrigerate between 2-8° C as soon as possible.
2. Transport medium must not contain Hank's Balanced Salt Solution

Deliver to: San Luis Obispo Public Health Laboratory, 2191 Johnson Ave, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401