

## SFDPH Influenza Lab Specimen Instructions

(12/2/2014)

### SPECIMEN TYPES

#### Preferred specimen types:

- Nasopharyngeal swab (Preferred): Use Dacron swab with an aluminum or plastic shaft. Place NP swab in sterile vial containing 2 ml of liquid viral transport media (VTM)
- Nasopharyngeal aspirate (Preferred): Place 1-2 ml of specimen into a sterile cup.
- Nasal wash or aspirate (Preferred): Place 1-2 ml of specimen into a sterile cup.
- Oropharyngeal (throat) swab AND a nasal swab (total of 2 swabs) (Acceptable, if unable to obtain one of the above specimens): Use Dacron swabs with an aluminum or plastic shaft. Place swabs in sterile vials containing 2 ml of viral transport medium.
- If the patient is hospitalized with pneumonia, then either tracheal aspirates or bronchoalveolar lavage should be collected. Collect 1-2 ml into sterile vial.

#### Other acceptable specimen types:

- dual nasopharyngeal/throat swabs and lower respiratory tract specimens (bronchoalveolar lavage, bronchial wash, tracheal aspirate, sputum, and lung tissue)

### SPECIMEN COLLECTION AND HANDLING:

- Specimens should be collected within the first 24-72 hours of onset of symptoms, and no later than 5 days from onset of symptoms.
- Specimens should be stored at 2-8°C immediately after collection. Specimen may be stored at 2-8°C for up to 72 hours. If samples are to be stored for longer than 72 hours prior to transport to the PH lab, then the specimens must be frozen at -70°C.
- For specimens delivered to the PH lab within 72 hours, please transport the specimen using cold packs. For specimens transported to the lab that are frozen, it is preferable to transport using dry ice.
- Avoid multiple freeze-thaw cycles.
- Do not store specimen in self-defrosting freezer.

### NOTIFICATION, LABELING AND DOCUMENTATION

#### Notification:

Required **only for suspected or confirmed influenza patients between the ages of 0 and 64 years and who have died** for these cases, please consult with the Communicable Disease Control Unit at (415) 554-2830 **AND** the SF Public Health Laboratory at (415) 554-2800.

#### Accompanying documentation:

The package should include a completed SFDPH specimen submission form (available at <http://www.sfdcpc.org/influenzareporting.html>). ***Please indicate that this is for "Influenza Surveillance" and include patient's risk factor, symptoms and other pertinent information (e.g. rapid flu test result) in-the "Comment" section of that Form, including Submitter's phone number.***

### SHIPPING

- Package according to Basic Packaging Method: use leak-proof specimen container and label specimen; place specimen container in secondary container with absorbent and cushioning material; place secondary container along with requisition in outer cardboard container.
- Use a trained/contract carrier and label outer container to meet the requirements of the carrier being used.

**Do not send by taxi.**

**Send Specimens to:  
San Francisco Public Health Laboratory  
101 Grove Street – Room 412  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
Phone: (415) 554-2800  
Fax: (415) 431-0651**