



Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine

RAPID INFLUENZA TESTING PROTOCOL

SPECIMEN COLLECTION

Nasal/Pharyngeal Swab

Specimen is to be collected on a cotton, rayon, or Dacron swab with an aluminum wire. No wooden shafts allowed. Transport in either the culturette swab or in 1 ml sterile saline in a sterile container.

- a. Remove excess secretions (runny nose) from the nasal opening using a regular cotton or Dacron swab. Insert the tip of the swab gently into the nose until the white tip is no longer visible and rotate. Withdraw swab and discard into hazardous waste container.
- b. Remove the culture swab from the package. Gently pass the swab through the nose and into the nasopharynx. You may need assistance in holding the head of infants and small children so they do not move or jerk their head.
- c. Rotate the swab on the nasopharyngeal membrane and allow the swab to remain in place for 10-15 seconds to absorb organisms. Replace swab in the culture swab container or place in 1 ml of sterile saline in a sterile container.

Nasal Washing (saline)

- a. Fill plastic pipette with saline and expel small amount into each nostril. (Or if using prepackaged saline aliquots, expel directly from container into nostrils).
- b. Aspirate secretions from nose with soft plastic or 5 ml rubber bulb syringe.
- c. Expel fluid from pipette into pre-labeled test tube or other suitable specimen container. No fixative should be added.
- d. Repeat this procedure at least two times.
- e. Wash volumes of 2-3 ml are recommended.

TRANSPORT

Transport to lab immediately. Refrigerate if transport time is greater than 1 hour.