



Dallas County Health and Human Services Influenza Specimen Submission Instructions

Updated August 26, 2016

Criteria for PCR testing and sub-typing of specimens for influenza at DCHHS:

- Specimens can be submitted for any hospitalized patient with a positive influenza test (rapid antigen, DFA, or PCR) or critically ill patient (ICU) with an unexplained respiratory illness.
- The DCHHS Laboratory Response Network (LRN) Laboratory will test specimens from the following Counties: Collin, Dallas, Ellis, Fannin, Grayson, Henderson, Hunt, Kaufman, Navarro, Rains, Rockwall, Van Zant.
- Facilities outside of Dallas County should contact their respective local Health Authority to coordinate specimen submission to DCHHS laboratory, case reporting, and follow-up.

Specimen Types Accepted:

- Nasopharyngeal swabs in viral transport media (VTM) are preferred. Nasal and throat swabs in VTM and nasopharyngeal nasal aspirates in VTM from intubated patients are also accepted.
- Only polyester fiber tipped swabs (Dacron or rayon), with plastic or aluminum shafts should be used. Do not use swabs which contain calcium alginate. No dry swabs are accepted.

Criteria for Specimen Handling:

- All tubes must be labeled with patient name and date of collection.
- Fresh specimens must be held at 4°C and immediately shipped on cold packs to DCHHS. Specimens older than 72 hours will not be tested unless documented that they were maintained at -70°C and transported to DCHHS on dry ice. Do not ship specimens at room temperature.
- Specimens should be placed in a biohazard bag, and must be accompanied by a completed "Specimen Submission Form" placed in the outer pouch of the biohazard envelope.
- All required fields must be completed on the "Specimen Submission Form." Please use the most current Specimen Submission Form, which is available at:
<http://www.dallascounty.org/department/hhservices/SeasonalInfluenza.html>

Transport:

- Pack and label specimens as Clinical Specimens. Ship according to IATA (International Air Transport Association) guidelines using overnight courier to arrive during business hours Monday-Friday: [DCHHS LRN Laboratory, 2377 N. Stemmons Fwy, Dallas, TX 75207](#).
- Specimens delivered by same day courier services will also be accepted.

Communication of Test Results:

- Test results will be faxed when available to the fax number indicated on the Specimen Submission Form. Test results can be released verbally only to the submitting contact person indicated on the Specimen Submission Form.
- Inquiries regarding specimen submission may be directed to: (214) 819-2004 or (972) 692-2762.