



Dallas County Health and Human Services Influenza Specimen Submission Instructions

Updated September 27, 2012

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, and VanZant.
- 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 or throat swabs in VTM and nasopharyngeal aspirates in VTM from intubated patients are also accepted.
- Only swabs with a synthetic tip, such as nylon or Dacron with plastic or aluminum shafts should be used. Do not use swabs which contain calcium alginate. Cotton swabs with wooden shafts are unacceptable. No dry swabs are accepted.

Criteria for Specimen Handling:

- All tubes must be labeled with Patient Name.
- Respiratory specimens, to be tested within 72 hours post collection, must be shipped refrigerated at 2-8°C. Specimens collected after 72 hours must be kept and transported frozen (preferably -70°C). Do not ship specimens at room temperature.
- Specimens should be double-bagged 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/hhs/influenza.html>

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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, 8:00AM-4:30PM: DCHHS LRN Laboratory, 2377 N. Stemmons Fwy Basement Suite 003, 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.
- Inquiries regarding specimen submission may be directed to: (214) 819-2004 or (972) 692-2762.