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Revised Interim Guidance on Specimen Collection, Processing, and Testing for Patients with Suspected Swine-Origin Influenza A (H1N1) Virus Infection

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Objective: To provide interim guidance on appropriate specimen collection, storage, processing, and testing for patients with suspected swine-origin influenza A (H1N1) virus infection.

Respiratory specimens:

Riverside County laboratory would prefer only nasopharyngeal swabs be submitted for testing until further notice. If these specimens cannot be collected, a combined nasal swab with an oropharyngeal swab is acceptable. If a nasal aspirate must be submitted, please use the Conica test tube as utilized for nasopharyngeal swabs. Specimens should be placed into sterile viral transport media (VTM) and immediately placed on ice or cold packs or at 4°C (refrigerator) for transport to the laboratory.

Swabs

Swab specimens must be collected using swabs with a synthetic tip (e.g. polyester or Dacron®) and an aluminum or plastic shaft. Swabs with cotton tips and wooden shafts are never to be used for this test. Specimens collected with swabs made of calcium alginate are not acceptable. The swab specimen collection vials should contain 1-3ml of viral transport medium (e.g. containing, protein stabilizer, antibiotics to discourage bacterial and fungal growth, and buffer solution), such M4RT or the BD Universal Viral Transport System (<http://www.bd.com/ds/productCenter/220240.asp>) respiratory specimens should be kept at 4°C until they can be placed at -70°C. If a -70°C freezer is not available, specimens should be kept at 4°C, preferably no longer than 1 week.

Specimens **must** meet the following criteria for testing:

1. **Hospitalized patients with Influenza-like-illness (ILI)** ILI is defined as fever (temperature of 100°F [37.8°C] or greater) and a cough and/or a sore throat in the absence of a KNOWN cause other than influenza.
2. **Students in an outbreak school that have ILI (outbreak= 1 confirmed or probable case)**
3. **Outpatients with ILI who have traveled to Mexico or any county with a confirmed case or had contact with someone who traveled to Mexico within the last 7 days.**

Specimens collected that do not meet the criteria will not be tested. Please include patient and submitter contact information with any specimens submitted.

Do to the large numbers of submitted specimens there maybe a delay in reporting of results (may exceed 7 days)

To obtain transport media (VTM) and dacron nasopharyngeal swabs go through your medical supply provider. To request media and nasopharyngeal swabs through the county please contact (951) 358-7100.