



County of San Diego

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TO: Laboratories performing Influenza virus diagnostic testing

FROM: Anna Liza M. Manlutac
Supervising Public Health Microbiologist
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DIAGNOSTIC TESTING GUIDELINES AND INFLUENZA REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR THE 2018-2019 INFLUENZA SEASON

The official start of the 2018-2019 influenza season was September 30, 2018. In keeping with California Department of Public Health guidelines and recommendations for influenza surveillance testing, we are requesting that specimens submitted to the San Diego County Public Health Laboratory (SDCPHL) for confirmation and further sub-typing be limited to those patients who have

- tested positive for influenza A and/or B by PCR or a rapid influenza diagnostic tests (RIDT)
- tested negative by RIDT but with a strong clinical suspicion. Note: RIDT may vary in terms of sensitivity and specificity and may produce false positives, especially when influenza prevalence is low, and false negatives when influenza prevalence is high.
- met one of the following criteria:
 - ILI (*ILI: influenza-like illness = fever >100°F or 37°C and cough and/or sore throat, in the absence of a known cause*) cases, especially **ICU and fatal** cases of influenza A and/or B
 - Acute respiratory outbreaks in institutions/congregate living settings (e.g. Long Term Care Facility, skilled nursing facilities, jails, sleepover camps etc.) of influenza like illness (ILI) within a 72 hour period
 - cases where history of travel or recent close contacts or exposures within 10 days of symptom onset, which suggest concern for variant or novel influenza infection, e.g. variant influenza A (H3N2v, H1N2v, or H1N1v, or avian influenza H5N1 or H7N9).

For additional information see:

- [Variant Influenza Virus Information \(CDC\)](#)
- [Avian Influenza A \(H7N9\) Virus in the United States \(CDC\)](#)
- [Highly Pathogenic Asian Avian Influenza A \(H5N1\) Virus \(CDC\)](#)
- [Novel Influenza Information \(CDPH\)](#)

Specimen Collection Guidelines:

- Upper respiratory samples suitable for RT-PCR include: nasopharyngeal (NP) swabs, nasal swabs, throat swabs, nasal aspirate, nasal washes, NP wash, and NP aspirate
- Lower respiratory tract samples from patients hospitalized with pneumonia should also be obtained. Lower respiratory tract samples include: bronchoalveolar lavage, bronchial wash, tracheal aspirate, and lung tissue.
- Use polyester or Dacron® tipped swabs and an aluminum and plastic shaft in 2-3 ml of viral or universal transport media (VTM/UTM), not saline. Swabs with cotton tips and wooden shafts are **NOT** recommended and swabs made of calcium alginate are **NOT** acceptable.
- Collect specimens within the first 24-72 hours of symptom onset and no later than 5 days after onset of symptoms.
- Keep refrigerated at 4°C and transport on cold packs within 3 days of collection.
- Swab in VTM/UTM may be held frozen if it cannot be delivered to our laboratory (SDCPHL) within 3 days. Please make a note on the form if the sample was held frozen.

SPECIMEN SUBMISSION FOR CONFIRMATION AND SUBTYPING: Please complete and submit the most current **SDCPHL LABORATORY TEST REQUISITION FORM**, effective 8/23/2018 found at https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/hhsa/programs/phs/phs_laboratory/ for each specimen referred to our laboratory for confirmation and subtyping.

REPORTING POSITIVE INFLUENZA TO EPIDEMIOLOGY DEPARTMENT: You may report using any of the following:

- Report via Electronic Laboratory Reporting (ELR), -or-
- Fax your Influenza Laboratory Reports to Epidemiology Program at 858-715-6458, -or-
- Use the attached CASE REPORT FORM and fax to Epidemiology Program at 858-715-6458

We appreciate your contributions to influenza surveillance by submitting influenza specimens to SDCPHL for confirmation/sub-typing. If there are any questions, please contact Anna Liza Manlutac or Crystal Renteria at 619-692-8500.

Live Well,

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Attachments: Influenza Case Report Form Fillable