



# County of San Diego

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October 3, 2019

TO: Laboratories performing Influenza virus diagnostic testing

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## DIAGNOSTIC TESTING GUIDELINES AND INFLUENZA REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR THE 2019-2020 INFLUENZA SEASON

In keeping with California Department of Public Health guidance 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 Quicksheet \(CDPH\)](#)

### 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 [San Diego Public Health Lab Test Requisition Form](#) for each specimen referred to our laboratory for confirmation and subtyping.

**REPORTING POSITIVE INFLUENZA TO EPIDEMIOLOGY DEPARTMENT:** Influenza cases are now reportable to Public Health as of October 1<sup>st</sup> 2019. Please report laboratory-positive influenza results to the County Epidemiology Program by using any of the following:

- **Electronic Laboratory Reporting (ELR)**, or by
- **FAX (858) 715-6458** using a
  - [Confidential Morbidity Report Form](#), or
  - [Influenza Case Report Form](#), and/or
  - Copy of the positive laboratory results indicating (if known) if the patient died and/or, is a resident of a congregate living facility.

We appreciate your contributions to influenza surveillance by submitting influenza specimens to SDCPHL for confirmation/sub-typing. Your efforts are critical in detecting changes in influenza viruses and determining when and where influenza activity is occurring. If there are any questions, please contact Anna Liza Manlutac or Crystal Renteria at 619-692-8500.

Thank you for your participation.

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