



SUTTER COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Public Health and Clinical Services Division

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H1N1 SWINE INFLUENZA

SPECIMEN INSTRUCTIONS

Criteria for use of nasopharyngeal swabs for Swine Flu testing

Due to limited availability of appropriate swabs for collection of nasopharyngeal secretions for Swine Flu testing, at this point in time the following criteria must be used to determine who will be tested.

If the patient does not meet these criteria, please do not waste the testing materials, since the specimen cannot be submitted for testing.

- 1) Only hospitalized patients or the sickest person in a cluster of cases can be tested. A cluster is defined as 3 or more cases. If the patient is not hospitalized, but is the sickest person in a cluster of 3 or more, this information **MUST** be written in the “Additional information” section of the specimen submittal form.
- 2) They must have had contact with a diagnosed case of H1N1 Swine Flu or have had recent travel to Mexico or within a county that has confirmed H1N1 Swine flu cases. A list of those counties is on <http://suttercounty.org/> and is being updated daily.
- 3) They must be exhibiting signs and symptoms of an upper respiratory infection, Including a temperature of 100 degrees F or higher.
- 4) Use the SCPH lab slip (sample attached), ***filled out completely.***
- 5) Include a Confidential Morbidity Report (CMR), ***filled out completely.***
- 6) ***Do NOT put the lab slip or CMR in the plastic bag holding the specimen.*** They would be considered contaminated and the provider will need to send new copies of the filled out forms before the specimen could be submitted for testing.
- 7) The provider’s staff (NOT a patient) must transport the specimens for Sutter County to the Sutter County Public Health Lab, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m.-4:30.
- 8) The lab is not open on the weekend, so please refrigerate the specimen in transport media at your site, and deliver it to the lab on Monday by 12:00 noon.

1445 Veterans Memorial Circle, P.O. Box 1510
Yuba City, CA 95992

Specimen Collection and Testing

The Sutter County Primary Care Clinic has only the resources for testing their own patients. The clinic cannot accept referrals to test or treat suspect swine flu cases. Providers with patients who meet the above criteria may collect specimens and submit them to the Sutter County Public Health Laboratory for testing.

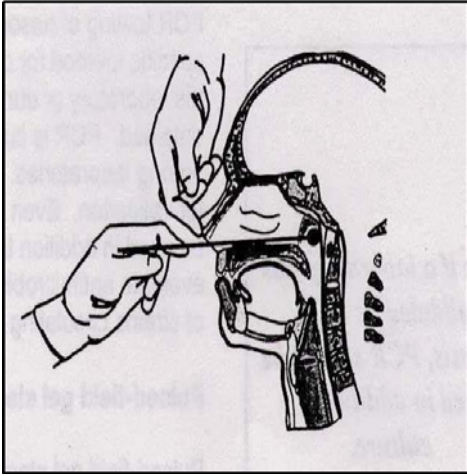
- **Specimen collection:** Please collect 2 respiratory samples from each patient with ILI. Nasopharyngeal swabs and nasal aspirates are preferable; throat swabs are acceptable if an NP swab or nasal aspirate cannot be obtained. The swabs should be placed in a standard container with 2-3 ml of viral transport media. If the patient is hospitalized with pneumonia, specimens from the lower respiratory tract (e.g., tracheal aspirate, broncho-alveolar lavage) should also be obtained.
- Each specimen should be labeled with date of collection, specimen type, patient's name, and collector's initials.
- Specimens should be collected within the first 24-72 hours of onset of symptoms and no later than 5 days after onset of symptoms.
- **Specimen storage:** The specimens should be kept refrigerated at 4°C and sent on cold packs if they can be received by a public health laboratory within five days of the collection date. If samples will be received by the laboratory in five or more days from collection, they should be frozen at -70 °C or below and shipped on dry ice.
- Vendors for specimen collection materials include:
 - Abbott: 1-800-323-9100
 - Fisher HealthCare: 1-800-640-0640
 - Hardy Diagnostics: 1-800-266-2222
 - MarketLab: 1-800-237-3604
- **Specimen submission:** Submit specimens with attached form to Sutter County Public Health Laboratory: 1445 Veterans Memorial Circle, Yuba City, 95993. The provider's staff (NOT the patients) must return the swabs to the Public Health Lab between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.
- **Nasopharyngeal swab collection**
Materials:
 - Dacron-tipped nasopharyngeal swab with flexible wire handle*
 - Viral transport media
 - Mask and gloves

*Cotton or calcium alginate swabs are **not** acceptable. PCR assays may be inhibited by residues present in these materials

Procedure:

1. Put on mask and gloves.
2. Have patient sit with head against a wall as patients have a tendency to pull away during this procedure.
3. Insert swab into one nostril **straight back** (not upwards) and continue along the floor of the nasal passage for several centimeters until reaching the nasopharynx (resistance will be met). The distance from the nose to the ear gives an estimate of the distance the swab should be inserted. Do not force swab, if obstruction is encountered before

- reaching the nasopharynx, remove swab and try the other side.
4. Rotate the swab gently for 5-10 seconds to loosen the epithelial cells.
 5. Remove swab and immediately inoculate viral transport media by inserting the swab at least ½ inch below the surface of the media. Bend or clip the wire swab handle to fit the transport medium tube and reattach the cap securely. A dry swab is acceptable for PCR testing.
 6. Specimen should be transported at refrigerator temperature and received by laboratory as soon as possible and <3 days from time of collection.



For a video of NP swab collection, please see:
<http://video.cdc.gov/asxgen/nip/isd/swabdemo.wmv>