

Instructions for Collecting a Nasopharyngeal Specimen for Respiratory Outbreaks

ITEMS TO BE USED FOR COLLECTING A NASOPHARYNGEAL (NP) SWAB:

- a) Virus respiratory 6 pack (to be stored at room temperature prior to use) and contains:
 - Specimen tube containing viral transport medium and flexible plastic NP swab (for sampling)
 - Requisition form located in a separate pouch at the front of the bag (your Toronto Public Health (TPH) investigator may provide a partially completed requisition)
 - Sealable plastic biohazard bag
- b) Personal Protective Equipment* (Gloves, surgical mask, gown, eye protection or face shield).

PROCEDURE FOR COLLECTING A NASOPHARYNGEAL SAMPLE:

BEFORE SAMPLING:


- a) Obtain an outbreak number from TPH investigator.
- b) Check expiry date on the side of the specimen tube to ensure that they have not expired.
- c) Label **each** specimen tube with the resident/patient information: last and first name, date of birth (DOB), date specimen collected and outbreak number. Specimens without a resident/patient name and DOB will **not** be processed.
- d) Complete the requisition form with resident/patient Health card number, sex, DOB, last and first name, address, date of collection, onset date: If not already completed by your TPH investigator, complete the following sections: **Test(s) Requested** = Respiratory outbreak organisms; **Specimen Type and Site** = nasopharyngeal; **Reason for Test** = Other, Specify, Respiratory outbreak; **Public Health Investigator Information** = Your TPH investigator name, phone and fax numbers; **Patient Setting** = Institution, **Clinical Information** = Respiratory symptoms.



SAMPLING:

- a) Perform hand hygiene.
- b) Put on gown, mask, eye protection/face shield and gloves.
- c) Resident's/patient's head should be inclined from vertical to about 70° or bed should be raised to a 45-degree angle.
- d) Unwrap the NP swab (flexible plastic) swab using sterile technique and gently insert it into one nostril (insert approximately one-half the distance from the tip of the nose to the tip of the earlobe).
- e) Press the tip of the swab on the mucosal surface of the mid-interior turbinate. Rub it back and forth about 5 times. Leave the swab in place for a few seconds to absorb material.

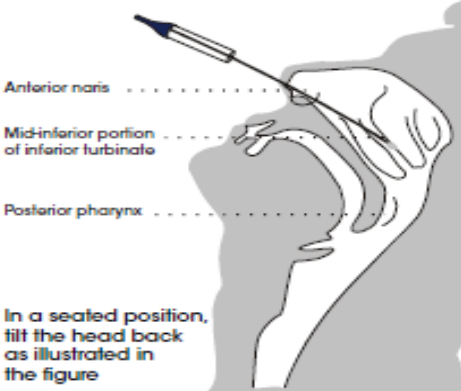
- f) Carefully withdraw the nasopharyngeal swab. Insert it into the specimen tube containing viral transport medium.
- g) Break excess plastic swab at the scored line on the swab shaft so that the plastic fits securely. Discard excess cut plastic.
- h) Close the specimen tube tightly using the original cap lid and agitate several times. Ensure that the tube's cap is well closed. The Public Health Ontario Laboratory (PHOL) will not process leaking specimens.
- i) Place the specimen tube into the large pouch located of the biohazard plastic bag (do not place the requisition form inside the bag with the specimen containers). Seal (close) the part of the bag that has the specimen containers in it by peeling off the adhesive strip.
- j) Remove gloves then gown. Discard PPE into appropriate container. Perform hand hygiene.
- k) Remove eye protection then mask. Discard PPE into appropriate container. Perform hand hygiene.
- l) Refrigerate the specimen immediately after collection (**Do Not Freeze**).
- m) Perform hand hygiene.
- n) Call your TPH investigator to arrange pick-up of specimens, if after regular business hours, call 3-1-1. Specimens should arrive at PHL as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after collection.

**Use of PPE: Refer to PIDAC Routine Practices and Additional Precautions in All Health Care Settings, Nov., 2012. For more information on enteric outbreak specimen collection refer to <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/ServicesAndTools/LaboratoryServices/Pages/Index.aspx>*


NASOPHARYNGEAL SPECIMEN COLLECTION

Nasopharyngeal swab method for Respiratory Virus Collection



In a seated position, tilt the head back as illustrated in the figure

The laboratory needs high levels of organism to test successfully for respiratory viruses such as RSV, Influenza A & B or parainfluenza virus.

Follow this procedure to yield high levels of organism.

1. Insert flexible nasopharyngeal swab into one nostril.
2. Press the swab tip on the mucosal surface of the mid-inferior turbinate.
3. Briefly rotate the swab once it has been inserted.
4. Leave swab in place for a few seconds to absorb material.
5. Withdraw swab and insert into transport medium.
6. Break swab shaft at score line.

N. B. Rule of thumb to determine when swab is placed properly: insert swab to one-half the distance from the tip of the nose to the tip of the earlobe.

