

Vermont Department of Health Laboratory

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1-800-660-9997 (VT only) or 1-802-338-4724

Instructions for Reporting, Collecting and Shipping Specimens for Influenza Virus (VDHL Kit 9)

This document contains detailed information on reporting, collecting, shipping, and testing of clinical specimens.

The kit should contain:

- Insulated shipping container (optional)
- Container(s) of refrigerant (e.g., Gel-Pak) (optional)
- Labeled screw-cap tube of viral transport medium
- (1) Micro-Tipped flocked nasopharyngeal swab
- (1) Traditional-Tipped flocked nasal swab
- Metal inner container
- VDHL Clinical Test Request form (Micro 220)

A. Reporting

To report hospitalized patients or specimens being submitted from an institutional setting, health care providers should notify the VDH Epidemiology Division at 802-863-7240 or 1-800-640-4374 (VT only) available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

B. Collection of Respiratory Specimens

1. Specimens should be collected within the first 3 days of illness onset.
 2. Print patient name and date of collection on labeled plastic tube containing the viral transport medium.
 3. **Preferred Specimens** - *Nasopharyngeal swab or Nasal swab:
 - **Nasopharyngeal swab:** using sterile technique, insert the dry nasopharyngeal swab into one nostril to the posterior pharyngeal area, hold the swab in place for 3-5 seconds to absorb secretions, rotate gently and then withdraw the swab.
 - **Nasal swab:** using sterile technique, insert a dry swab approximately 2 cm into the naris. Rotate the swab against the anterior nasal mucosa for 3 seconds. Using the same swab, repeat for the other naris.
- *Swab specimens should be collected using swabs with a Dacron® tip and an aluminum or plastic shaft. Swabs with calcium alginate or cotton tips and wooden shafts are unacceptable.
4. Place the swab(s) into the tube of viral transport medium. Break off the top portion of the swabs at the score line such that the cap can be placed on. Screw cap on the viral transport tube tightly.
 5. Place labeled viral transport tube containing the swab into the metal container provided. Screw cap on tightly.
 6. Fill out the requisition form (Micro 220) completely. **Please document any recent foreign travel history in the Travel History box.**
 8. Place the completed requisition form in the outside pocket of the biohazard bag. Place the metal container containing the specimen into the Ziploc portion of the biohazard bag. Place the biohazard bag containing the specimen and form into the large Ziploc bag.

C. Shipment

Specimens should be shipped cold and received at the VDH Laboratory within 72 hours of collection. If the time of receipt is expected to exceed 72 hours, the specimens should be shipped frozen.

If you have any comments or questions regarding these instructions, please call one of the telephone numbers listed on the front of this form.