

DCLS Influenza Testing Helpful Reminders

Submissions of suspected highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) or suspected novel influenza specimens require advance notification to DCLS during business hours at 804-648-4480, x281 or x227; after business hours at 804-335-4617.

I. Specimen Collection

- DCLS only accepts **nasopharyngeal (NP) swabs** in **liquid viral transport media (VTM)** or **residual VTM** from NP swab specimens
- A minimal volume of **2.5 - 3mL of VTM** is required to ensure all applicable testing is performed
- **Nasal swabs are not acceptable**
- **Universal transport media (UTM) and gel transport media are not acceptable** currently
- DCLS provides specimen collection kits for influenza testing, upon request
 - Kits can be requested at DCLS_SSSKits@dgs.virginia.gov
- Labs can utilize their own inventory of unexpired synthetic swabs and VTM

II. Specimen Storage and Transport

- All specimens must be stored and transported refrigerated on ice packs
- A completed (front and back) [DCLS Test Request form](#) must accompany each specimen
 - **Full patient name and date of birth (must match specimen label)**
 - **Complete submitter information**
 - **Date and time of specimen collection**
 - **Disease suspected**
 - **Onset date and symptoms**
- Include applicable tracking and/or outbreak IDs on the test request form
 - Sentinel flu surveillance ID: RES989flusentinel
 - Pre-Screened positive surveillance ID: RES989PSP

III. Testing Logistics

- **Surveillance specimens (sentinel flu and pre-screened positives):** can be submitted in batches, as long specimens are stored refrigerated at 4°C up to 7 days or at -20°C for 7 days or more
- **Diagnostic, outbreak, HPAI and novel flu specimens:** must be received at DCLS within 72 hours of collection
- **Flu A-unsubtypable specimens (Flu A positive results obtained without a subtype using a test capable of providing Flu A subtypes):**
 - **Contact DCLS immediately if HPAI or novel flu is suspected**
 - **Provide relevant exposure and/or travel history on the test request form**
- DCLS utilizes multiplex assays that detect both Flu and COVID-19
- DCLS performs subtyping on all Flu A and Flu B positive specimens
- **For testing questions, contact the following:**
 - Dr. LaToya Griffin-Thomas (Lead Scientist) at 804-648-4480, x281
 - Sean Kelly (Group Manager) at 804-648-4480, x227