



PHL 08-55 Instructions for Influenza Surveillance Specimen Collection

Glen F. Baker Public Health Laboratory

Specimen Collection

- Collect a nasopharyngeal (NP) swab specimen from a positive Influenza A or B patient.
- Use only an NP swab and immediately place the swab specimen into 3 mL of viral transport media (VTM).
- Do NOT use calcium alginate swabs or swabs with metal or wooden shafts.
- Do NOT collect specimens in transport systems intended for bacteriological collections (such as Amies media), or MTM (molecular transport media), or saline.

Nasopharyngeal (NP) Swab Collection and Labeling

- Insert flexible plastic shaft swab through the nares parallel to the palate (not upwards) until resistance is encountered, or the distance is equivalent to that from the ear to the nostril of the patient, indicating contact with the nasopharynx.
- Gently rub and roll the swab. Leave swab in place for several seconds to absorb secretions before removing.
- Place entire swab and shaft in tube containing VTM. Break the plastic shaft to fit inside the tube and secure the cap firmly.
- Label VTM tube with patient name, date of birth, and collection date.

Submission in the Laboratory Web Portal

- Use <https://prod.labwebportal.com/ar/#/auth/login> to log into the Laboratory Web Portal. Select “AR Covid-19/Flu/RSV” as the test for Flu Surveillance. Include all submitter information.
- Private submitters not signed up for laboratory web portal use may do so at <https://prod.labwebportal.com/ar/#/auth/login> or email ADH.Lab.Web.Portal@arkansas.gov for assistance.
- Report any flu-like symptoms, hospitalization, recent travel, influenza vaccination history, and influenza test results.

Packaging

- Place specimen in Ziploc portion of biohazard bag.
- Refrigerate specimens at 2-8°C if they are held before transport. DO NOT freeze specimens.

Shipping

- Place biohazard bag containing the specimen in an appropriate specimen shipping container with a cold pack to maintain cool temperature before and during shipment. Do NOT freeze.
- Specimens MUST be received in the testing laboratory within 72 hours of collection time.
- Specimen shipment may be arranged through your nearest Local Health Unit at no cost. Deliver to:

Glen F. Baker Public Health Laboratory
201 S. Monroe St.
Little Rock, AR 72205
Ph. 501-661-2220

Note to Couriers (Glen F. Baker Health Laboratory hours 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday)

Deliveries to the Glen F. Baker Public Health Laboratory should be made to the Specimen Receiving area at the rear entrance on the East side of the building on Palm St. Turn at the fourth driveway on the right from the corner of W. Markham and Palm St.