I. Preferred/Acceptable/Unacceptable Specimens

Preferred respiratory specimens for the CDC Flu rRT-PCR Dx Panel:
The following should be collected as soon as possible after illness onset: nasopharyngeal swab, nasal aspirate or wash or a combined nasopharyngeal swab with oropharyngeal swab. If these specimens cannot be collected, a nasal swab or oropharyngeal swab is acceptable. For patients who are intubated, an endotracheal aspirate should be collected. Broncho alveolar lavage (BAL) and sputum specimens are also acceptable.

Acceptable specimens for the CDC Flu rRT-PCR Dx Panel
- Upper respiratory specimens: NPS, PS, NS, TS, NA, NW
- Lower respiratory tract specimens: BAL, BW, TA, sputum and lung tissue

Unacceptable specimens (specimens will be rejected for testing)
- Respiratory specimens in Rapid Test Lysis Buffer
- Less than 1ml of Universal Transport Media or Viral Transport Media
- Calcium alginate swabs

II. Universal Transport Medium (UTM) Specimen Collection Kit Instructions

Local health department can order the UTM Specimen collection kit by calling (443) 681-3777 or by faxing a completed request form (http://maryland.gov/laboratories/docs) to (443) 681-3950.

The UTM specimen Collection Kit from MDH Laboratories Administration contains:
- Clear plastic biohazard bag
- Flock swab for specimen collection
- Tube of universal transport medium
- MDH Form 4676 Infectious Agents: Culture Detection (paper version). An online fillable version of this is form (MDH 4676) is also available at: http://health.maryland.gov/laboratories/docs

Upon receipt of the specimen collection kit:
1. Note the expiration date printed on the tube of UTM. Do not collect any specimens using this medium after the expiration date!
2. Kit, including UTM, should be stored at room temperature.

To collect swab specimens:
1. Collect specimen from patient using flock swab.
2. Place swab in UTM of Viral Transport Media (>2ml). Do not collect any specimens using this medium after the expiration date!
3. Break off swab on the snap point on its shaft so that the swab fits in tube. Close lid of UTM tube, making sure that it is securely screwed onto tube.
4. Label specimen tube with patient's name exactly as it appears on the lab slip.
5. Place UTM tube in clear plastic biohazard bag.
6. Fill out lab slip as described below.
7. Place lab slip in secondary pouch on outside of clear plastic bag.
8. Place assembled collection kit in refrigerator or cooler with cold gel packs until transport to the laboratory.

III. Laboratory Test Request Slip (Infectious Agents: Culture Detection) Instructions (see Influenza [Types A & B] Test Request Sample Form).
An online fillable version of MDH Form 4676 is also available at: http://health.maryland.gov/laboratories/docs
1. Please complete the submitter information box.
2. Include patient name, date of birth, and address.
3. Indicate specimen source using the key code located at the bottom right of the form.
4. Indicate date patient became ill (date of onset) and date this specimen was collected (collection date).

IV. Packaging and Shipping
1. Within 72 hours after collection, specimens should be refrigerator (4°C) and transported with cold gel packs to the laboratory as soon as possible.
2. Please deliver all specimens to the MDH Laboratories Administration at 1770 Ashland Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21205 as clinical diagnostic specimens. Alternatively, please deliver to your local health department for shipment to the MDH Laboratories Administration.

For questions, please contact the Division of Molecular Biology Laboratory at (443) 681-3923 or (443) 681-3924
Influenza Test Request Sample Form

Source of the specimen:
Use only those codes to provide the

The influenza test requested:
Indicate the specimen source next to

Number field:
If applicable, complete the outbreak

Fill in the date specimen was collected.

Must complete submitter information

Math exactly to the lab slip.

Patients' first and last names must be

Authorized person requesting the test:
and include the name of the

(410) 667-3923/3924 or www.medicare.maryland.gov/locations