

Laboratory Specimen Information

9/13/14

- **TIMING OF SPECIMEN COLLECTION:**

Collecting specimens during the first week of illness is ideal.

- **RECOMMENDED SWABS:**

For nasopharyngeal (NP)/ oropharyngeal (OP) and/or rectal swabs, please use only sterile dacron or rayon swabs with plastic shafts or if available, flocked swabs. DO NOT use calcium alginate swabs or swabs with wooden sticks, as they may contain substances that inactivate some viruses and inhibit some molecular assays. Place the NP/OP swabs immediately into a sterile vial containing 2 ml of viral transport media without antibiotics. If you do not have viral transport media or other media, the swab(s) may be sent dry. Aseptically, cut or break applicator stick off near the tip to permit tightening of the cap. Sterile PBS or Hank's balanced salt solution (HBSS), (no antibiotics) can be used in lieu of viral transport medium.

- **Store and ship specimens at 2°C-8°C. Wet ice transport is recommended.**

Transporting the Specimen

1. Ensure that when transporting human respiratory specimens, all applicable regulations for the transport of the etiologic agents are met.
2. Transport human respiratory specimens in VTM refrigerated at 2°C-8°C.

- **Samples must be received into the lab and processed within 72 hours of collection.**

Storing Specimens

1. Store specimens refrigerated 2°C -8°C and ship to the State Laboratory on enough wet ice (a wet ice and freezer brick combination will work best during the warmer months) to maintain a 2°C-8°C transport temperature.
2. Samples must be received and processed within 72 hours of collection. Ship specimens overnight to the State Laboratory on the day they are collected so we can process them prior to the 72 hour deadline.
3. To minimize the effects of multiple freezing and thawing every attempt should be made to deliver the specimen to the laboratory within 72 hours from collection. If delivery to the laboratory within 72 hours from collection is not possible (ie, Sample collected on a Friday etc.), freeze the specimen at $\leq -70^{\circ}\text{C}$ upon collection and ship to the laboratory on dry ice. If the sample is frozen at any point, it must remain and be shipped frozen. Document the date/time of freezing on the specimen submission form.