COLLECTION OF SPECIMENS FOR SUSPECTED INFLUENZA

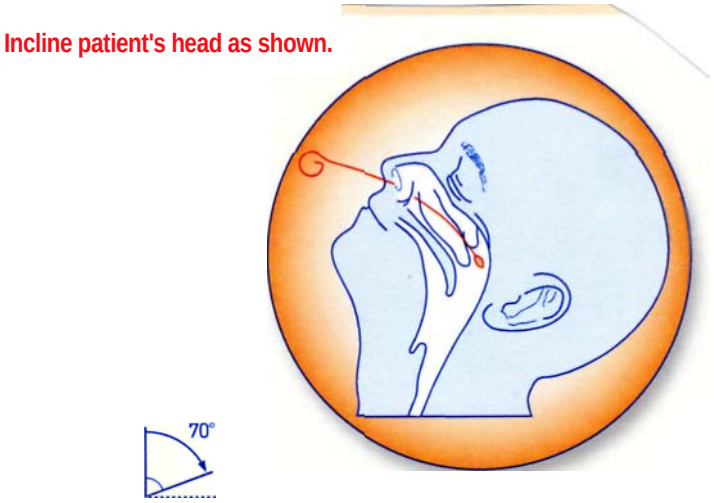
Sensitivity and specificity of any test for respiratory viruses might vary depending on the type of specimen tested. The appropriate specimen for rapid testing and viral culture for influenza is a nasopharyngeal swab.

Please call the laboratory with any questions or requests for supplies. (860) 679-4001.

COLLECTION OF SPECIMENS

NASOPHARYNGEAL SWAB METHOD

1. Incline patient's head at an angle as illustrated below.



2. Bend the shaft of the Copan MicroRheologics flocked swab (preferred) or wire-shafted, dacron nasopharengeal swab.
3. Insert swab through nostril to posterior nasopharynx (same distance as from nostrils to external opening of the ear) until resistance is felt.
4. Rotate swab for several seconds to obtain infected cells.
5. Repeat procedure using other nostril. Collection of specimens from both nostrils increases the amount of material for analysis and the ability to isolate the virus.
6. Place the swab(s) in the tube of viral transport medium (M-4, M-6, or UTM).
7. Cut off the excess plastic or wire shaft and screw the cap tightly.
8. Complete a microbiology requisition (ED) or an outpatient requisition and order a Rapid Influenza test and a Viral Respiratory Culture. Testing is currently being done only on those patients who meet the CDC case definition criteria for patients suspected of having swine influenza.

STORAGE AND TRANSPORT: Transport to the laboratory as soon as possible. Specimens can be held at 2 - 8°C centigrade (refrigerator temperature) for up to 24 hours prior to testing however sensitivity decreases with time.