

Influenza Testing Guidance

Testing methodology: Detection of viral RNA by real-time reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (rRT-PCR). Turnaround time: 3 business days

Respiratory Specimens (Preferred)

- Duplicate nasal, nasopharyngeal swab, or oropharyngeal (throat) swabs. A single swab is acceptable if duplicate swabs cannot be collected.
- Place both swabs into one viral transport media tube containing 1-3 mL of sterile viral transport media.
- Use a sterile synthetic swab (e.g., nylon or Dacron) and an aluminum or plastic shaft.
- Calcium alginate swabs are unacceptable and cotton swabs with wooden shafts are not recommended.
- Nasal aspirate or nasal wash is acceptable.

Specimen Storage and Shipping

- Ship specimens for testing as soon as possible.
- Ship all specimens on refrigerant gel-packs (2-8°C) within 24 to 72 hours.
- If specimen shipping will be delayed for more than 3 days, specimens should be frozen at -70°C and transported on dry ice to avoid multiple freeze-thaw cycles.

Specimen Testing

Specimen testing at San Bernardino County Public Health Laboratory (SBCPHL):

- Patient's assigned lab should be considered prior to sending specimens to SBCPHL
- Phone: (800) 722-4794 (available during business hours, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.)
- After Hours Phone: (800) 472-2376 (available after hours, weekends, and holidays)

Additional Information



- Complete the SBCPHL [Laboratory Test Request Form](#) for each specimen.
- If applicable, include contact information of the communicable disease investigator assigned to the case.
- Send submittal form by secure email to dphlab@dph.sbcounty.gov; include hard copy with specimens.



Ship approved specimens to:

San Bernardino County Public Health Laboratory
150 E. Holt Blvd.
1st Floor Lab Receiving
Ontario, CA 91761



Notify SBCPHL that specimens are being submitted by e-mailing dphlab@dph.sbcounty.gov.

In a secure e-mail, please include patient name and date of birth, and the name and contact information of the point of contact at the submitting facility. Also include the contact information of the communicable disease investigator assigned to the case if applicable.

Questions about specimen collection, submittal, or shipping: Please contact SBCPHL at (909) 458-9430 during regular business hours Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-5 p.m., or e-mail dphlab@dph.sbcounty.gov.