



## Laboratory Testing Information

Viral specimen test kits may be ordered at no cost from the BCCDC. Order forms and lab requisition forms may be downloaded from the BCCDC Public Health Laboratories website. The order form link is on the right hand column labelled "Sample Container Order form".

<http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Forms/Labs/PHLOrderForm.pdf>

Viral isolation swabs should be ordered for individual influenza testing, or influenza like illness outbreak kits for facilities. The fax number to submit orders is on the form.

During respiratory season, specimens may be processed for influenza virus by nucleic acid testing and for respiratory viruses by the Respiratory Virus Panel Luminex Assay as well as by conventional cell culture. When the respiratory virus panel is used, physicians may receive positive lab reports for other common, non-influenza respiratory pathogens, even when only influenza testing was initially ordered. The PHSA lab is offering this extended service to physicians to assist with clinical decisions, as well as contribute to community disease surveillance.

### **Specimen collection:**

Collect specimens from patients presenting with influenza-like illness within 72 hours of onset of symptoms. Specimens from severely ill patients and children are acceptable after 72 hours of symptom onset.

Nasal and nasopharyngeal swabs are preferred but nasopharyngeal washes, suction and other lower respiratory tract specimens are acceptable as well. To perform a nasal swab incline the patient's head as required and insert the cotton swab along the base of the nasal cavity to a depth of 2-4 cm into the nostril. Swab around the inside of the nostril and along the nasal septum by rotating the swab between the fingers.

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