Specimen Submission Guidance for Possible H5 Influenza Specimens for Subtyping

A Completed G-2V Submission Form Must Accompany Every Specimen

Specimen Types and Storage

Use: Sterile nylon- or polyester-tipped swabs in Viral Transport Medium (VTM) or Universal Transport Medium (UTM)

Acceptable for Influenza Surveillance and Subtyping: Nasopharyngeal swab (NP), nasal swab (NS), throat swab (OP)

Acceptable for Influenza A(H5) Testing: NP, NS, OP, conjunctival swab (CS)*

*Must be paired with an NP or dual NS/OP swab

Swabs with cotton tips or wooden shafts are not acceptable.

Specimen Storage and Shipping

- Store and ship VTM/UTM cold at 2°C–8°C or freeze at -70°C or below.
- If specimens will arrive at the Laboratory within 72 hours of collection, refrigerate at 2°C–8°C.
- If specimens will arrive at the Laboratory more than 72 hours after collection, freeze at -70°C or below.
 - Keep refrigerated specimens cold with frozen gel packs.
 - Keep frozen specimens frozen with dry ice.
- Maximize insulation by packing any empty space around specimens with absorbent packing material.

Shipping Influenza Specimens to the Laboratory

Ship as Category B Biological Substance, UN3373. Specimens must be:

- **Triple Packaged** to withstand shock, pressure changes, leaks, and other ordinary handling conditions while in transit
- **Packaged with Enough Absorbent Material** such as paper towels that can soak up the entire contents of the specimen container
- Shipped with Adequate Refrigerant/Dry Ice to keep specimen(s) cool or frozen for up to 48 hours. Use multiple frozen cold packs.
- Ensure all tubes are securely closed to prevent leaks!
- Secure tube lids shut by wrapping in paraffin film (e.g., Parafilm).
- Ensure outer mailer is properly labeled, especially if shipping on dry ice.

Visit DSHS' online <u>Specimen Shipping and Mailing Guidance</u> for more details on shipping Category B substances to the Laboratory.



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Ship Specimens Cold or Frozen Overnight!



Revised 01/2025

Completing G-2V Submission Forms to Submit Possible H5 Influenza Specimens to DSHS Laboratory for Subtyping

Label Specimen With Unique Identifiers

Every specimen must have at least two unique patient identifiers on its label.

1 Snow, John

1. Name

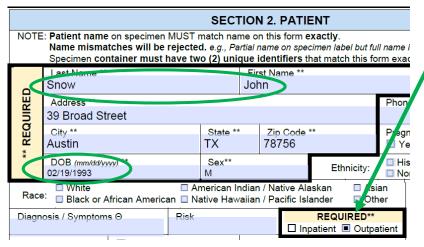
2 DOB: 02/19/1993

3 06161858

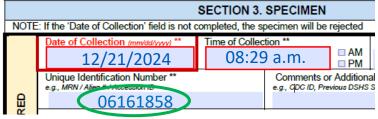
- 2. Date of Birth
- 3. Medical Record Number

Provide Patient Identifiers in Sections 2 and 3 of G-2V Specimen Submission Form

Patient identifiers on specimen label and submission form must match. Provide patient's full address, including zip code.



Date and **Time of Collection must** be provided in Section 3.



Questions About ...

Identify Level-of-Care in Section 2

Check *Inpatient* or *Outpatient* as the patient level of care. **This is required for surveillance specimens.**

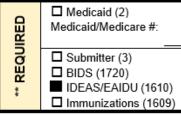
Select Test Type in Section 4

Check Influenza surveillance.

- **Include** previous influenza test results, and subtyping, if performed.
- Indicate if patient had a high-risk exposure to H5N1 or was exposed to H5N1-infected birds or other animals.

Select Payor Source in Section 6

Check "IDEAS" as the payor source.



Influenza Testing: 512-776-7594, 512-776-2452 or <u>viral.isolation@dshs.texas.gov</u> Influenza and Influenza-Like Illness Surveillance: <u>flutexas@dshs.texas.gov</u> Submitter ID Numbers or Submission Forms: 512-776-7578 or <u>LabInfo@dshs.texas.gov</u> Overnight Shipping Address: Walter Douglass, Texas Dept. of State Health Services

dress: Walter Douglass, Texas Dept. of State Health Services, Public Health Laboratory Division, 1100 W. 49th Street, Austin, TX 78756-3199



TEXAS Health and Human Services

Texas Department of State Health Services

dshs.texas.gov

Three patient identifiers provided on this label:

Influenza Surveillance Specimen FAQs

for Submitting Possible H5 Influenza Specimens to DSHS Laboratory for Subtyping

What Specimens Should be Prioritized for Faster Subtyping?

Prioritize submission of influenza A positive specimens from patients who: are in intensive care units (ICUs), meet epidemiological criteria for testing, or have influenza A positive, unsubtypeable influenza test results.

• Please also submit subsets of specimens (3–5 per week) from other hospitalized patients.

Do I Need to Have a DSHS Lab Submitter Account to Submit Specimens?

Yes. If you are not a DSHS submitter, you may obtain a DSHS submitter ID number by completing a <u>Submitter ID Request Form</u> and emailing it to the DSHS Laboratory Reporting Group at <u>LabInfo@dshs.texas.gov</u> or faxing it to 512-776-7533. A Lab Reporting team member will contact you to complete the onboarding process.

How Do I Update My DSHS Laboratory Submitter Contact Information?

Update your contact information by providing it in a <u>Submitter ID Request Form</u>. Email or fax the completed form to the Lab Reporting Group (contact info. above).

• Please **do not manually correct** contact details in Section 1 of the G-2V Form.

How Do I Obtain New Master G-2V Submission Forms?

- **Request** a master G-2V submission form by emailing the Laboratory Reporting Team at LabInfo@dshs.texas.gov or calling 512-776-7578 or 1 (888) 963-7111 ext. 7578.
- Please do not use sample watermarked submission forms from the DSHS website.
 - Specimens received with sample watermarked submission forms cannot be processed.

Does the DSHS Lab Provide Free Specimen Collection Supplies and Shipping?

Yes! Specimen collection kits, VTM, and a shipping service for flu surveillance specimens are provided at no cost to submitters.

- Email <u>flutexas@dshs.texas.gov</u> to request collection kits and shippers.
- **Email** <u>labcourier@dshs.texas.gov</u> to request FedEx **shipping labels**.

Questions About . . .

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