

*Department of State Health Services/South Texas Laboratory*  
**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS SPECIMENS**

Inadequate or inappropriate specimen collection, storage, and transport are likely to yield false negative test results. Training in specimen collection is highly recommended due to the importance of specimen quality.

Proper collection and preservation of specimens is **IMPERATIVE!!!** We are here to briefly review the factors necessary to have a significant end-product or valid report.

I. **NASOPHARYNGEAL SWABS – INFLUENZA SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19)**  
**Multiplex PCR Assay, including subtyping and genotyping when indicated**

To obtain best results, it is important that material be obtained before antimicrobial therapy and taken in a proper manner. The use of a viral transport kit is required.

1. Gloves should be worn when handling human and body fluids. Gloves can prevent transmission of blood-borne pathogen infection from a specimen, and contamination of the sample by exfoliated cells from persons handling the sample. All applicable safety precautions regarding handling body fluids should be followed.
2. Swab specimen should be collected using only swab with synthetic tip, such as nylon or Dacron, and aluminum or plastic shaft and placed in Viral Transport Media immediately after collection.
3. Follow specimen collection devices manufacturer instructions for proper collection methods. The patient's tongue should be depressed and throat well exposed, rub the swab firmly over the back of the throat, both tonsils, any area of inflammation, exudation or ulceration. Care should be taken to avoid touching the tongue, cheeks, or lips with the swab.
4. Place the swab in viral transport media (VTM) immediately after collection and transport it cold. If transportation is delayed, it can be held up to 72 hours, refrigerated.
5. If longer than 72 hours before specimen reaches the laboratory, it should be frozen and shipped with dry ice.

**UNACCEPTABLE SPECIMENS**

1. Calcium alginate swabs are unacceptable and cotton swabs with wooded shafts are not recommended.

REFERENCES: CLSI MM13-A

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**LABORATORY TEST/EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS  
SURVEILLANCE TESTING**

<b>Test Name:</b>	<b>INFLUENZA SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) Multiplex Assay</b>
<b>Patient Preparation:</b>	None
<b>Specimen</b>	Nasopharyngeal swabs
<b>Requirement/Collection:</b>	Specimens should be collected following specimen collection devices manufacturer instructions for proper collection methods and placed in viral transport media (VTM). Each specimen container should be labeled with patient's name, ID number, date and time of collection, and collector's initials, placed in a specimen transport bag and refrigerated immediately after collection.
<b>Special Timing for Collection:</b>	None
<b>Preservative:</b>	Viral Transport Media
<b>Transportation Requirements/Storage:</b>	Transport human respiratory specimens in Viral Transport Media (VTM) refrigerated at 2-8°C. Specimens should be processed within 72 hours, if specimen requires longer storage, freeze sample and submit frozen.  Ensure that when transporting human respiratory specimens, all applicable regulations for the transport of etiologic agents are met.
<b>Required Requisition:</b>	<b>F40-D Specimen Submission Form</b>