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Influenza Surveillance Programme

Collection and Transportation of Specimens for Influenza Virus detection.

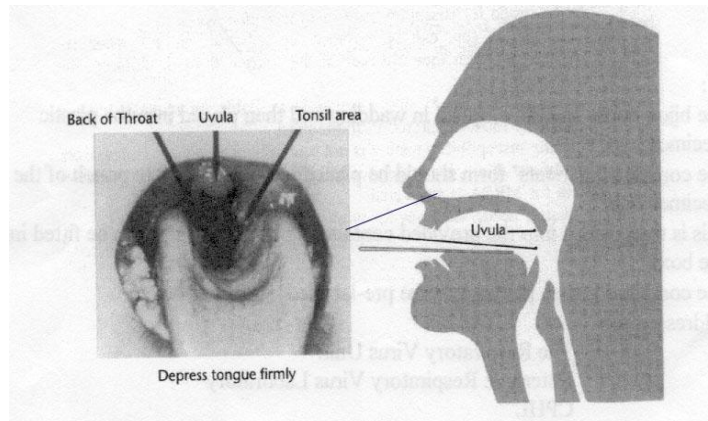
GPs participating in this programme should ensure that they have been supplied with an influenza specimen collection kit containing the following: (a) wire swabs, (b) flocked (plastic) swabs with transport media, (c) patient information forms, (d) plastic containers and (e) transport box. The National Virus Reference Laboratory provides these kits free of charge.

Protocol:

GPs are required to provide a combined nose and throat swab specimen from cases presenting with suspected influenza or influenza like illness.

➤ *Taking the specimen and filling in the forms:*

1. The flocked(plastic) swab is used to abrade the tonsils and pharynx (see diagram).
2. The swab is then broken off into a bottle containing the transport medium.



3. The flexible wire swab is inserted into the nostril and rubbed against and above the nasal turbinate.
4. The swab is then agitated thoroughly into the same bottle as the flocked swab to release virus infected cells. The wire swab may then be withdrawn and discarded safely.
5. Ensure that the bottle lid is secured tightly onto the bottle to prevent leakages.
6. Label the bottle with Patient's Name and Date of Birth.
7. It is important to complete fully and legibly the patient information form provided.

Transport bottle containing flocked swab and transport medium.



➤ **Packaging and transportation to the laboratory:**

1. GP's should be familiar with the regulations pertaining to conditions of posting for pathological specimens.
2. The labelled primary container /specimen bottle should be placed in the plastic mailing container provided (1 specimen per container). There should be sufficient absorbent wrapping to ensue that the specimen cannot move about the plastic container.
3. The container and the completed form should then be placed into transport box provided. (Two containers maximum per transport box)
4. The name and address of the sender should be clearly marked on the outside of the transport box to ensure they are contactable in case of damage or leaks.
5. The package should be addressed :

**Influenza Surveillance Unit
National Virus Reference Laboratory
University College Dublin
Belfield
Dublin 4.**

6. Specimen should reach the laboratory within 24 hours.
7. Where unavoidable delays are envisaged, specimens should be stored at 4°C and sent to the NVRL as soon as possible.

Labelled primary
container containing
specimen



Plastic mailing container with
primary specimen container
enclosed.



Open transport box with
container



Closed transport box ready to be
addressed