

Nasopharyngeal Swab Collection for RSV or Influenza

Nasopharyngeal swab (NP swab) collections are used for testing for respiratory tract infections caused by RSV and influenza. The rapid test for influenza is best done within 24-72 hours of onset of symptoms. This is when the virus load is at it's highest.

Supplies: Gloves

Eye protection (goggles or face shield)

Surgical mask

Puritan UTM-RT Transport System (Fig. 1) Order from lab: Influenza A/B & RSV kit.



Figure 1 – RSV/Flu swab

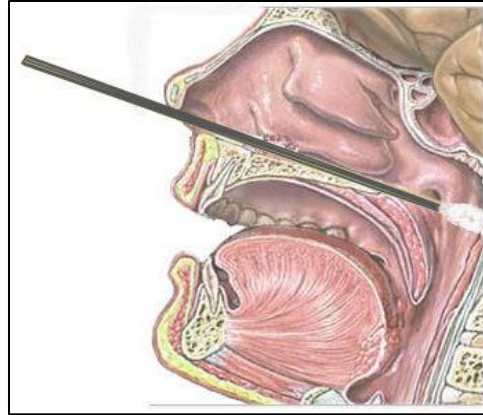


Figure 2

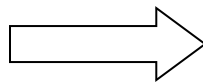
Procedure:

1. Put on a surgical mask, eye protection and gloves.
2. Have patient blow nose to remove excess nasal secretions.
3. Remove swab from package and insert dry swab through one nostril **straight back** (not upwards), along the floor of the nasal passage until reaching the posterior wall of the nasopharynx. The distance from the nose to the ear gives an estimate of the distance the swab should be inserted. **See Figure 2**

Tip: The patient may gag or show other signs of discomfort. I may help to instruct patient to sit with his/her head against a wall/chair back to reduce the tendency of pulling away during this procedure.

Note: Do not force swab. If resistance is encountered during swab insertion, remove it and attempt insertion in the opposite nostril. If the swab cannot be advanced to the nasopharynx through either nostril, do not discard the attempted collection, but submit the swab to the lab with a note attached to the swab/requisition, that the swab was collected from the nose, not the nasopharynx. Swabs from the nose will not be as sensitive to the detection of these viruses.

4. **Rotate swab gently for 5-10 seconds** and then remove.
5. **Immediately place swab into the provided transport tube (red cap).** Break the swab at the score line. The end of the swab will stick up above the vial opening. Place the red cap on the vial by pushing the cap down on the end of the swab; it will shorten as it bends down into the vial and the cap can then be threaded on to the vial.



6. Label the transport tube appropriately with:
 1. Patient name
 2. Date of birth or medical record number,
 3. Date and time of collection.
7. **Onsite collections:** Transport the sample to the testing lab promptly at room temperature.
Offsite: Refrigerate the sample....stable for 4 days when refrigerated.
8. Flu and RSV testing takes one hour to complete upon receipt in the Microbiology laboratory.