



Division of Laboratories

Surveillance Program – Instructions for Influenza Virus Specimen Submission

A. A maximum of five specimens per week may be submitted as part of the Illinois Department of Public Health Influenza Surveillance Program. Acceptable specimens include nasopharyngeal swabs, nasal swabs, throat swabs, nasal aspirates, nasal washes, dual nasopharyngeal/throat swabs, bronchoalveolar lavages, tracheal aspirates, bronchial washes, sputum, lung tissue and viral cultures.

B. Instructions for specimen transport

- 1. Specimens must be maintained at 2 C-8 C at all times following collection and during shipment. Also, testing must be performed within 72 hours of collection.** Therefore, ship specimens within 24 hours of collection, avoiding shipping specimens over weekends and holidays. If specimens cannot be shipped based on this algorithm, hold specimens at -70 C or less than -70 C and ship on dry ice.
- 2. Messenger/Courier by ground transport:** Wrap specimen(s) individually in absorbent material. Place wrapped specimen(s) into a biohazard bag and seal securely. Place the test requisition(s) in the outside pouch of the biohazard bag. Place the sealed bag with the test requisition(s) inside the shipping container; **add cold packs (or dry ice if appropriate).** The shipping container must be rigid, such as a cooler, and labeled with the UN 3373 Biological Substance Category B marking. For packages with dry ice, affix the UN1845/class 9 hazard labels. Close securely.
- 3. Commercial carrier by ground/air transport:** Wrap specimen(s) individually in absorbent material. Place the wrapped specimen(s) inside a biohazard-labeled 95 kPa bag and seal following the instructions on the bag. Place the test requisition(s) in the outside pouch of the 95 kPa bag. Place the sealed 95 kPa bag and completed requisition(s) inside the outer shipping container, **add cold packs** and close securely. Complete the return address section to include the name of the person shipping the package, business name and address, and a business phone number. The shipping container must include the UN 3373 Biological Substance Category B marking. For packages with dry ice, affix the UN1845/class 9 hazard labels
- 4. Ship specimens by the fastest delivery method possible (local courier or commercial shipping corporation) to one of the following address:**

Illinois Department of Public Health
Division of Laboratories
1155 South Oakland Avenue
Carbondale, IL 62901
Phone 618-457-5131
Fax 618-457-6995

Illinois Department of Public Health
Division of Laboratories
2121 W. Taylor Street
Chicago, IL 60612
Phone 312-793-4760
Fax 312-793-1322

Illinois Department of Public Health
Division of Laboratories
825 N. Rutledge Street
Springfield, IL 62702
Phone 217-782-6562
Fax 217-524-7924

- 5. Note:** While shipping on Thursdays is usually acceptable, sometimes even overnight packages are not received until the second day, and the laboratory is not open on Saturday. Take special care when shipping during holidays. If specimens are brought to the lab by courier, they still need to be on ice packs or dry ice. **Any specimens that have not been maintained at the proper temperature, or are more than three days old when received (except if sent frozen), will be reported as “unsatisfactory” and not tested.**