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March 2007

## **Pandemic/Avian Influenza is Suspected**

### **-Specimen Collection and Transportation Guidelines**

To Health Care Providers

The following information is to guide the submission of specimens when cases of Pandemic or Avian Influenza are suspected. Suspect cases will typically have symptoms of an undiagnosed Febrile Respiratory Illness and will have been exposed to either animals or persons infected with a possible Pandemic/Avian Influenza virus. These specimens require prior authorization and specialized collection and transportation.

#### **Authorization**

Test requests require prior authorization from the local Public Health Unit or a Public Health Laboratory Microbiologist.

#### **Requisition: Required information**

Complete all regular fields on the requisition and provide the following information:

- Test requested: Pandemic/Avian Influenza and Routine Viral Testing (Direct Testing and Culture)
- Travel history: For the 2 to 3 weeks prior to illness onset, list where traveled and dates of departure to and from Ontario.
- Indicate if the patient had contact with: Ill people, ill or dead animals. If yes, indicate what type of animal.
- Direct contact information for a specific clinician (phone answered by a person or pager number).
- The name and contact number of the Public Health official who authorized the test.

#### **Specimen Collection**

- Required - One Nasopharyngeal (NP) swab or NP aspirate placed in Viral Transport Media using a PHL Respiratory Virus Collection Kit (Viral-Resp)
- If gastro-intestinal symptoms are present, also submit a faecal sample in Viral TM kit

If possible, the following samples should also be submitted:

- One lower respiratory tract specimen (e.g. bronchial washing), minimum volume of 2 ml in a sterile container
- One blood specimen collected in a serum separator tube (tiger top)

Write the patient's full name and a second identifier (eg. date of birth, Health Insurance Number) on each specimen.

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## **Pandemic/Avian Influenza is Suspected**

### **-Specimen Collection and Transportation Guidelines (Continued)**

#### **Packaging**

Label and package specimens according to Transportation of Dangerous Goods guidelines.

- Place the specimens in the biohazard bag and seal the bag.
- Place the completed requisition with the required information in the outside pocket of the biohazard bag.
  
- Address label to include

Virus Detection Section  
"Urgent Specimen(s)"

#### **Specimen Transportation**

Notify the Local Public Health Laboratory prior to sending the specimen(s) and provide the following information:

- When the sample will be sent
- Name of the courier and tracking number, if applicable
  
- If the specimen is associated with an outbreak, advise the local Public Health Laboratory, include the outbreak number, and the number of ill and deceased.

Deliver the specimens or courier directly to your local Public Health Laboratory as soon as possible after collection.

#### **For further information:**

- Contact your local Public Health Laboratory
- OPHL HELPLINE at **1-800-640-7221**
- Ministry website at <http://www.health.gov.on.ca>