

Specimen Collection and Transport

- **The requested specimen types are upper respiratory tract clinical specimens (including nasopharyngeal swabs [NPS], nasal swabs [NS], nasal aspirates [NA], nasal washes [NW] and dual nasopharyngeal/throat swabs [NPS/TS]) and lower respiratory tract specimens (including bronchoalveolar lavage [BAL], bronchial wash [BW], tracheal aspirate [TA], sputum, and lung tissue) from human patients with signs and symptoms of respiratory infection and/or from viral culture**

Collecting the Specimen

1. Follow specimen collection devices manufacturer instructions for proper collection methods.
 2. Swab specimens should be collected using only swabs with a synthetic tip, such as nylon or Dacron, and an aluminum or plastic shaft.
 3. Calcium alginate swabs are unacceptable and cotton swabs with wooden shaft are not recommended.
 4. Respiratory swabs should be collected and placed into viral transport media (VTM).
 5. For non-swab specimens, aseptically dilute liquid sample with an equal volume of viral transport media.
- **Store and ship specimens at 2-8°C. Wet ice transport is recommended.**

Transporting the Specimen

1. Ensure that when transporting human respiratory specimens, all applicable regulations for the transport of the etiologic agents are met.
2. Transport human respiratory specimens in VTM refrigerated at 2-8°C.

- **Samples must be received into the lab and processed within 72 hours of collection.**

Storing Specimens

1. Store specimens refrigerated 2-8°C and ship to the State Laboratory on enough wet ice (a wet ice and freezer brick combination will work best during the warmer months) to maintain a 2-8°C transport temperature.
2. Samples must be received and processed within 72 hours of collection. Ship specimens overnight to the State Laboratory on the day they are collected so we can process them prior to the 72 hour deadline.
3. To minimize the effects of multiple freezing and thawing every attempt should be made to deliver the specimen to the laboratory within 72 hours from collection. If delivery to the laboratory within 72 hours from collection is not possible (ie. Sample collected on a Friday etc.), freeze the specimen at $\leq -70^{\circ}\text{C}$ upon collection and ship to the laboratory on dry ice. If the sample is frozen at any point, it must remain and be shipped frozen. Document the date/time of freezing on the specimen submission form.