

MDPH wants your NP swabs...

Influenza surveillance for the 2016-17 season

...for influenza testing and more!

MDPH wants NP swabs?

Yes. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) Immunization Program is requesting submission of NP swabs for patients with influenza-like illness (ILI) from interested healthcare providers in Massachusetts. These swabs will be tested for influenza at the Massachusetts State Public Health Laboratory (MA SPHL). Specimens testing negative for influenza will also be tested for a full panel of respiratory pathogens, including a variety of viruses and bacterial organisms.

What's the catch?

There is no catch. Testing is done for influenza surveillance purposes, and the results are helpful to those in clinical practice. You may discover that your patient with respiratory illness has an illness other than flu. The Massachusetts State Public Health Laboratory (MA SPHL) will provide the testing kits for sites that agree to test and submit their specimens to MA SPHL. We will also provide couriers to pick up the specimens, if necessary. There is no charge for this service. **This testing is an important component of influenza surveillance in Massachusetts.**

How many specimens would a provider's office need to collect?

At this time there is no limit to the number of specimens you can submit for testing. However, this may change as needed later in the season. We are requesting NP swabs for patients who present with **influenza-like illness (ILI)** that began <72 hours prior to being seen. ILI is defined as:

Fever ($\geq 100^{\circ}\text{F}$ [37.8°C], oral or equivalent – AND - cough and/or sore throat

PCR testing will occur at MA SPHL and results will be reported out within 72 business hours. For specimens that are negative for influenza, the BioFire FilmArray Respiratory Panel will test for the viruses and bacterial organisms listed below:

- Influenza
- Adenovirus
- Coronavirus (HKU1, OC43, NL63, 229E)
- Human Metapneumovirus
- Parainfluenza (1-4)
- Respiratory Syncytial Virus (A/B)
- Human Rhinovirus/Enterovirus
- *Bordetella pertussis*
- *Chlamydophila pneumoniae*
- *Mycoplasma pneumoniae*

Why participate?

These results will give you an idea of what may be causing respiratory illness in your patient and in your community. Flu surveillance data are critical in monitoring the course of influenza virus activity on the local, state, and national level. Influenza viruses are constantly evolving and cause substantial morbidity and mortality every year. These data can be used to guide prevention and control activities, vaccine strain selection, and patient care. **By submitting NP swabs to MA SPHL for flu testing, you are helping MDPH protect the public health.**

Contact Joyce Cohen, MPH for more information about how you can participate:

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