

Appendix 3: Guide to Request for Novel Influenza Virus Testing

I. Contact information

For enquiries on laboratory testing:

General enquiries	2319 8247
Medical Staff	2319 8252 / 2319 8253 / 2319 572 / 2319 8574

Address:

Virology Division
9/F Public Health Laboratory Centre
382 Nam Cheong Street, Shek Kip Mei, Kowloon

Facsimile: 2319 5989

Outside office hours:

Medical Control Officer 7116 3300 Call 9179

II. Indications for testing

Specimens should be sent to the Virology Division for patients having the following clinical conditions with epidemiological link:

Clinical conditions

1. patient with:
 - i. clinical features of severe influenza infection or
 - ii. acute respiratory illness (fever with cough, sore throat, shortness of breath or difficulty in breathing) or
 - iii. severe pneumonia
2. patient died of unexplained acute respiratory illness

AND

Epidemiological link

1. patients having contact with a confirmed Influenza A H5N1 or novel influenza infected human case or animal or
2. patients having contact with poultry or wild birds or their remains or with an environment contaminated by their faeces, or patients having consumed raw or undercooked poultry products in countries or areas with documented human or avian influenza H5N1 infections or novel influenza virus infections or
3. persons having handled samples (animal or human) suspected of containing Influenza A H5N1 virus or a novel influenza virus in a laboratory or other settings.

III. Specimen collection

1. Persons taking specimens from patients with suspected infection with novel influenza virus should take proper infection control precautions with appropriate personal protective equipment.
2. The following respiratory samples should be taken as soon as possible after onset of illness, before anti-viral treatment and placed in viral transport media.

- i. Upper respiratory tract - posterior-pharyngeal (throat) swabs, naso-pharyngeal swabs, nasal swabs with nasal secretions (from the anterior turbinate area) or nasopharyngeal aspirates or swabs
 - ii. Lower respiratory tract - bronchoalveolar lavage or tracheal aspirate
 - iii. Other specimens:
 - a. Stool / rectal swab (especially if the patient has diarrhea) may be considered
 - b. Cerebrospinal fluid if meningitis or CNS involvement by the infecting virus is suspected and a spinal tap is to be performed for diagnostic/therapeutic purposes.
3. Paired sera for antibody testing should be taken during the acute and convalescent phase of illness.
- i. Acute clotted blood/serum should be collected as soon as possible, preferably within 7 days, after onset of illness.
 - ii. Convalescent clotted blood/serum should be collected at least 2 weeks after onset of illness.

IV. Laboratory request form

A laboratory request form DH2542 / DH2546 (or computer generated HA laboratory request form using electronic requesting system), together with the "Request for Novel Influenza Virus Testing" form (Appendix 3a), obtainable from the Virology Division, must be completed legibly in full and accompany each specimen and laboratory request form, in order to ensure expedient specimen processing.

V. Specimen should be labelled, packaged and transported as with other virological specimens.