

Specimen Type	Specimen Collection & Storage Instructions
<p>Lower Respiratory (sputum, bronchoalveolar lavage, tracheal aspirate, and bronchial wash)</p>	<p>For bronchoalveolar lavage, tracheal aspirates, and bronchial washes collect 2-3 ml into a leak-proof, sterile, screw cap sputum collection cup or sterile dry container. Refrigerate up to 72 hours at 2-8°C. If specimens will not be shipped to the Maryland Department of Health Labs within 72 hours, freeze specimens at -70°C as soon as possible after collection and ship specimens to the lab on dry ice. For sputum collections, have the patient rinse their mouth with water and then expectorate deep cough sputum directly into a leak-proof, sterile, screw cap sputum collection cup.</p>
<p>Upper respiratory specimens (nasopharyngeal swabs (NPS), Nasal swabs (NS), Throat swabs (TS), Nasal aspirates (NA), Nasal washes (NW), Dual nasopharyngeal/throat swabs (NPS/TS))</p>	<p>Use only synthetic fiber swabs with plastic shafts. Do not use calcium alginate swabs or swabs with wooden shafts as they may inhibit PCR testing or inactivate some viruses. Place swabs, after collecting patient specimen, directly into 2-3 ml of viral transport media. These specimens can be refrigerated up to 72 hours at 2-8°C. If specimens will not be shipped to the Maryland Department of Health Labs within 72 hours, freeze specimens at -70°C as soon as possible after collection and ship specimens to the lab on dry ice.</p> <p>For upper respiratory washes and aspirates, collect 2-3 ml into a leak-proof, sterile, screw-cap sputum collection cup or sterile dry container. DO NOT add the washings to viral transport media, as this may dilute out any virus and provide false negative results. These specimens can be refrigerated up to 72 hours at 2-8°C. If specimens will not be shipped to the Maryland Department of Health Labs within 72 hours, freeze specimens at -70°C as soon as possible after collection and ship specimens to the lab on dry ice.</p>