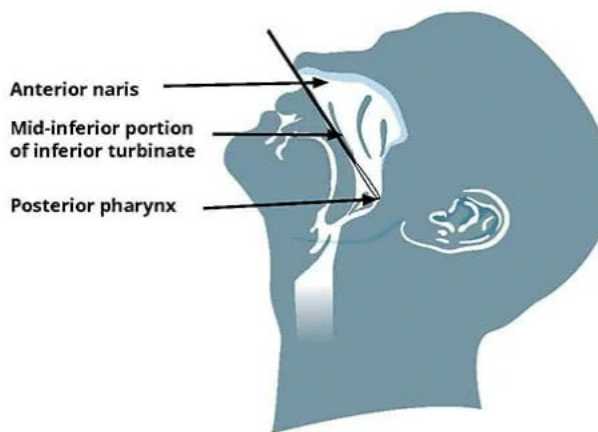




Nasopharyngeal Specimen Collection Instructions

Public Health Ontario | Santé publique Ontario

1. In a seated position, tilt the patients/residents/clients head back 70 degrees.
2. Insert the flexible shaft swab mini-tip through the nose straight back (not upwards) until you hit resistance (about half the distance from the patients/residents/clients ear to their nostril).
3. Gently rotate the swab several times against the wall of the nose and let it sit for a few seconds to absorb secretions.
4. Slowly remove the swab from the nose and immediately place it in the test tube.



Tilt the head back at a 70° angle as illustrated in the picture.




Image adapted from: www.publichealthontario.ca

Back to Basics

As we prepare for another respiratory season and the busyness of it all, let's take a moment to reflect on some of the skills we have been performing over the years. Patient/resident/client safety should be the focus of our practice as Infection Control Practitioners.

COVID-19 and respiratory virus specimen collection is an important part of outbreak management and guides us in implementing safety measures to reduce the spread of infections in congregate living settings (CLS). Appropriate collection is critical for accurate detection of respiratory viruses and control of the environment (i.e., implementing the correct type of precautions based on mode of transmission).

The above graphic outlines the correct sequence for obtaining a nasopharyngeal (NP) swab for respiratory viruses like COVID-19, influenza, and RSV. However, there are also other instructions/guidelines to consider before you obtain an NP swab; they are as follows:

-  NP specimen collection is designated as a controlled act under the Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA) and may only be performed by authorized regulated professionals such as Registered Nurses (RNs) and Registered Practical Nurses (RPNs). Those authorized to perform the controlled act of NP specimen collection can ONLY do so if ordered by a physician or Nurse Practitioner, or if initiated in accordance with conditions set out in the regulation (i.e., following a medical directive).
-  Always perform hand hygiene and wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when collecting an NP swab. This includes a protective gown, gloves, a face mask/N95 mask, and a face shield.
-  Remember to label the test tube with the patients/clients/residents full name, date of collection, and one other unique identifier such as the date of birth or Health Card Number. Failure to provide all required information may result in testing disqualification or delay.

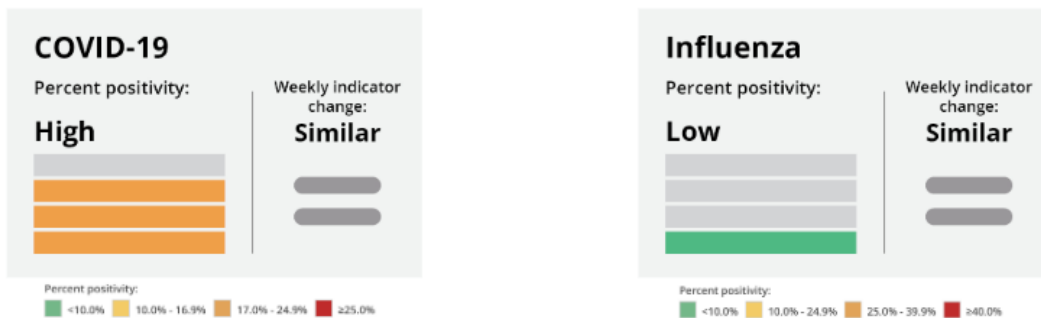
Information adapted from: www.publichealthontario.ca



- ✔ Remember to complete all fields of the COVID-19 and Respiratory Virus Test Requisition.
- ✔ Some collection kits may have expiration date extensions beyond the manufacturers label. The list of expiry extensions for COVID-19 testing products is available through the [Ontario Health COVID-19 Health System Response Materials](#) page.
- ✔ Unused kits should be stored at 2-25°C until used. Improper storage will result in a loss of efficacy. Kits should only be stored appropriately up until their expiry date.
- ✘ Limitations: Only swabs designed for nasopharyngeal collection should be used. Caution and clinical judgment is advised when swabbing individuals with recent facial trauma, severe epistaxis, and/or significant abnormality of the nasopharyngeal anatomy.

Ontario Respiratory Virus Tool

The Ontario Respiratory Virus Tool provides comprehensive epidemiological information on respiratory virus activity in Ontario, including COVID-19, influenza, RSV, and other respiratory viruses. Explore respiratory virus data including case trends, outcomes (hospital bed occupancy, ICU bed occupancy, and deaths), laboratory testing, and outbreaks. **Week of September 15, 2024 to September 21, 2024:**



Show summary for the most recent week

Show summary for the current surveillance period

COVID-19

Percent positivity in the most recent week
17.7%

Outbreaks reported in the most recent week
103

Hospital bed occupancy reported in the most recent week
764

Deaths reported in the most recent week
10

Influenza (all types)

Percent positivity in the most recent week
0.3%

Outbreaks reported in the most recent week
0

Hospital bed occupancy reported in the most recent week
40

Deaths reported in the most recent week
Not available

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

Percent positivity in the most recent week
0.4%

Outbreaks reported in the most recent week
1

Hospital bed occupancy reported in the most recent week
18

Deaths reported in the most recent week
Not available