

Annex 3~B: Nasopharyngeal Swab Procedure (PHAC 2006)

Please note that point of care testing is not recommended during an influenza pandemic.

Nasopharyngeal Swab Procedure

1. Use the swab supplied with the viral transport media.
2. Explain the procedure to the patient.
3. When you collect specimens, wear gloves and a mask. Change gloves and wash your hands between each patient.
4. If the patient has a lot of mucus in the nose, this can interfere with the collection of cells. Either ask the patient to use a tissue to gently clean out visible nasal mucus or clean the nostril yourself with a cotton swab.
5. Estimate the distance to the nasopharynx: Prior to insertion, measure the distance from the corner of the nose to the front of the ear and insert the shaft **only half this length**.
6. Seat the patient comfortably. Tilt the patient's head back slightly to straighten the passage from the front of the nose to the nasopharynx to make insertion of the swab easier.
7. Insert the swab provided along the medial part of the septum, along the floor of the nose, until it reaches the posterior nares; gentle rotation of the swab may be helpful. (If resistance is encountered, try the other nostril; the patient may have a deviated septum.)

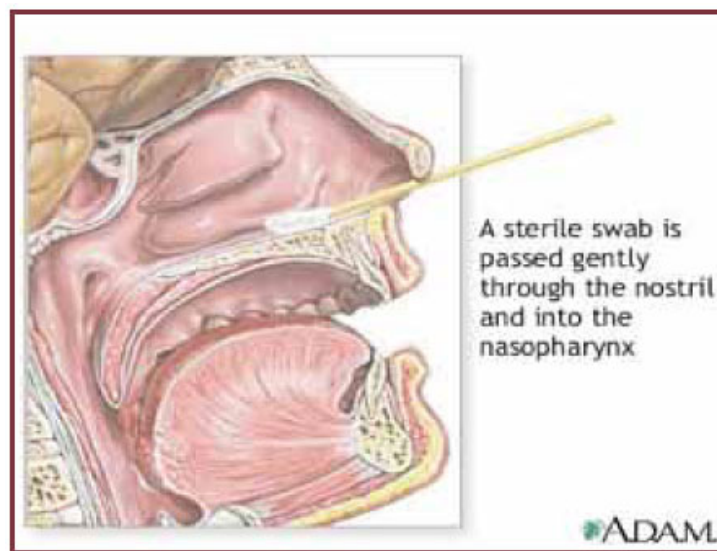


Image obtained from www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/imagepages/9687.htm

8. Allow the swab to sit in place for 5–10 seconds.
9. Rotate the swab several times to dislodge the columnar epithelial cells. *Note: Insertion of the swab usually induces a cough.*
10. Withdraw the swab and place it in the collection tube.
11. Refrigerate immediately.
12. Remove gloves
13. Wash hands.
14. Attach completed requisition.
15. Transport specimen to the laboratory.