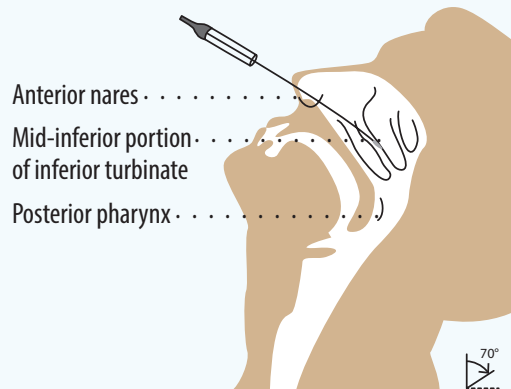


JUST THE FACTS

TAKING A NASOPHARYNGEAL (NP) SWAB

Instructions

1. **Call the Health Unit** to ensure that an outbreak number is assigned to the specimen and that the Public Health Lab is notified.
2. **Put on your personal protective equipment** (mask, goggles, gown, and gloves).
3. **Position person** with bed raised to 45 degrees or in a comfortable position.
4. **Clean nares** with the cotton swab.
5. **Estimate the distance** the swab will need to be inserted into the nose, by ensuring the distance from the tip of the earlobe to the tip of the nose. As a rule of thumb, the swab will need to be inserted approximately half of that distance (see picture).
6. **Incline person's head** as shown in picture and gently insert the swab into the nostril to the previously determined mark.
7. **Rotate swab** 3 to 5 times as tolerated and leave it in place for a few seconds to absorb the material.
8. **Withdraw swab and insert into transport medium** provided. Break swab shaft evenly at the scored line and cap vial tightly. *Don't forget to label specimen container.*
9. **Complete requisition form** with all pertinent information.
10. **Use sealable bag to transport specimen to the laboratory:**
 - Place transport medium in sealable bag.
 - Seal bag by removing blue strip to reveal adhesive.
 - Place requisition in outer pocket.
 - Refrigerate specimen immediately.



Anterior nares
Mid-inferior portion
of inferior turbinate
Posterior pharynx

Patient's head should be inclined from vertical to about 70°.

Respiratory virus packs normally contain materials sufficient for 4 to 6 swabs for culture of respiratory viruses such as influenza virus, parainfluenza virus, and respiratory syncytial virus.

The following will be needed:

- Masks, goggles, gowns, and gloves
- Cotton swab
- Plastic swab with fibre tip
- Viral transport medium
- Pen



For more information.

Windsor-Essex County Health Unit
www.wehealthunit.org
Community Outbreak Team
519-258-2146 ext. 1444

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Remember: Viral transport medium may be stored at room temperature until it is used. Always check expiry date on transport medium before use.

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