

## Guidance (2024-2025) for Providers regarding Respiratory Viral Testing

**Goal:** Ensuring appropriate testing for patients with respiratory viral illnesses (fever, cough, shortness of breath, acute loss of taste and smell, myalgias, fatigue, runny nose, congestion).

This document focuses on testing of **symptomatic patients only**. **Testing for asymptomatic patients is not available at UVMHN labs due to testing not being approved by the FDA for asymptomatic patients.**

### **COVID-19 Testing:**

**Indication:** All symptomatic patients with respiratory viral symptoms in which a result would change patient management including treatment and isolation

#### **Specimen Collection:**

1. **Nasopharyngeal (NP) swab** for sample of posterior nasopharynx, collected by health care worker (HCW). This specimen can also be tested for influenza, RSV (without a second collection) if indicated (see below).
2. **Anterior nares (AN) swab** CANNOT be tested for influenza or RSV (requires second collection with NP swab).

### **Influenza / RSV:**

**Indications:** Specific testing for Influenza / RSV **should occur** for the following:

1. Symptomatic people at higher risk for serious complications from influenza:
  - a. Adults 65 and older
  - b. Children under the age of 5, especially those under the age of 2
  - c. Native Americans and Alaskan Natives
  - d. People who are pregnant and up to 2 weeks postpartum
  - e. People with underlying medical conditions such as - chronic lung disease, heart disease, kidney disease, liver disease, neurologic disease, hematologic disease, diabetes, metabolic disorders, obesity, immunosuppression, or if  $\leq 19$  years of age & receiving chronic aspirin therapy
2. Symptomatic household contacts of people at higher risk of severe complications
3. Symptomatic influenza-like illness requiring hospitalization for any indication
4. Symptomatic residents of long-term care facilities

Testing for influenza and RSV in otherwise healthy outpatients without risk for severe disease **should not occur without** a compelling clinical reason. All patients for whom influenza testing is indicated should be tested for **Influenza/RSV and COVID-19**.

#### **Specimen Collection:**

Nasopharyngeal (NP) swab for sample of posterior nasopharynx, collected by Health Care Worker.

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**Expanded Respiratory Viral Panel** (metapneumovirus, parainfluenza, adenovirus, rhinovirus): **is not indicated *unless*** COVID-19, influenza, and RSV tests are negative, and the patient has severe illness or a compromised immune status.

**Specimen Collection:**

Nasopharyngeal (NP) swab for sample of posterior nasopharynx, collected by Health Care Worker.

**Additional recommendations:**

1. If the patient has severe respiratory disease, testing above can be performed on lower respiratory tract samples.
2. Empiric antiviral treatment is recommended for patients with suspected influenza who are hospitalized or at higher risk for severe disease and should not be delayed while awaiting diagnostic testing results.

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