

Date: August 13, 2024

Title/Test: H5N1 Influenza Surveillance and Testing

Explanation of Test:

The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) recently provided updated guidance regarding surveillance for influenza (including highly pathogenic avian influenza A(H5N1)) in patients with severe respiratory illness and the submission of specimens to Wadsworth Center.

H5N1 is a subtype of influenza A and can be detected by rapid test methodologies. However, a rapid test will only detect that a sample is influenza positive and whether it is flu A or B. The rapid test will not determine the subtype. The specific subtype can only be determined by additional testing at Wadsworth.

Per NYSDOH recommendation:

1. Positive rapid influenza specimens from ICU patients will automatically be forwarded to Wadsworth Center for additional testing (including subtyping) year round.
2. Positive rapid influenza specimens from all hospitalized patients (non-ICU) will automatically be forwarded to Wadsworth Center for additional testing (including subtyping) for the remainder of this year.

Test requests for H5N1 specific Influenza testing on patients with clinical history/exposure other than the above mentioned scenarios must be coordinated through the local health department where the patient resides. If testing is recommended, the health department will direct the type of sample(s) to be collected. If the person has conjunctivitis (with or without respiratory symptoms), both a conjunctival swab and nasopharyngeal swab should be collected, in addition to other recommended swabs.

Please contact the Microbiology Lab at (607)274-4474 with any questions.

  
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Laurie Miras, Microbiology Manager

Date 8/14/24

  
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Michelle Walters, Laboratory Administrative Director

Date 8/14/24

  
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Dr. Elizabeth Plocharczyk, Laboratory Medical Director

Date 08/14/24