

MICROBIOLOGY UPDATES

Laura Ross, MS, MT (ASCP)

The following includes updates and reminders regarding the collection of specimens for Respiratory Syncytial Virus, Pertussis and Influenza A and B.

Specimen collection: Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

For the convenience of the patient, collect this specimen in the physician's office. Patients should *not* be sent to laboratory specimen collection sites. The physician should use a green capped minitip culturette (Remel) and the specimen **must** be collected from the nasopharynx. Do not collect the sample from the anterior nares or throat. Swabs may be refrigerated for up to 10 hours until transported to the laboratory. All positive results are called to the ordering physician.

Although submission of the minitip culturette is acceptable for rapid RSV testing, utilizing viral transport media (Remel MicroTest M4RT) provides the lab with a specimen suitable for further testing, including viral culture or rapid flu test. To submit the specimen in the viral transport media, the wire of the minitip culturette shaft should be cut with scissors so that the minitip swab can be inserted into the viral transport media for transport to the lab.

Specimen collection: Pertussis (Whooping Cough)

All physicians suspecting pertussis as a diagnosis should call the Microbiology Lab at 203-739-7305 to make an appointment for specimen collection by a trained Microbiology technologist at Danbury Hospital. Specimen collection for pertussis is **NOT** available at laboratory specimen sites. **NO pertussis specimens should be collected in offices due to the requirements for immediate specimen processing.** The technologist will also prepare a slide for direct fluorescent antibody testing at the same time the culture is collected. Diagnosis is made by either a positive direct fluorescent antibody stain or by positive growth on culture media. Stains are performed once daily. The cultures are held for 7 days before being finalized as negative. All positive cultures and positive direct fluorescent stains are called to the physician.

Specimen collection: Influenza A and B

Specimens for rapid flu testing MUST be collected in the physician's office. Specimen collection is not available at laboratory specimen collection sites. The specimen that has the best sensitivity is a nasopharyngeal swab. This is collected on a green capped minitip culturette (Remel) and submitted in Remel MicroTest M4RT viral transport media. The wire shaft of the minitip culturette should be cut with scissors so that the swab can be inserted into the viral transport media. The viral transport media is a conical tube with an orange cap and contains pink liquid which maintains optimal conditions for virus recovery from specimens. The tube is packaged with a swab that can be used to collect the sample from the nares or throat, although the sensitivity of the test is less with those body sites than with nasopharyngeal samples. Once collected in viral transport media, the sample is also acceptable for a viral culture in addition to the rapid flu screening test.

Questions may be directed to the Microbiology section of the laboratory at 203-739-7305.

REMINDER: Specimen Labeling Criteria

Specimens collected for testing at the Danbury Hospital laboratory must be labeled appropriately to ensure accurate patient identification. The patient's FULL first and last name, date of birth, date and time of collection and initials of the person collecting the specimen must be on the label. Labels must be affixed directly to the specimen and should not be on the bag containing the specimen or loose in the bag with the specimen.

SAFETY ISSUE

The laboratory at Danbury Hospital provides plastic tubes for specimen collection for those samples being collected for testing at the Danbury Hospital laboratory. Please notify Customer Service Representative, Sandra Smith, at 203-739-7800 for specimen collection equipment needs.