



Laboratory Alert Notification: Enhanced Influenza Surveillance

June 13, 2024

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as well as state and local public health departments, have implemented enhanced surveillance strategies due to the ongoing global outbreak of Influenza A (H5N1).

- Additional surveillance ensures awareness of circulating Influenza subtypes
- Assistance with proper reporting as well as timely specimen submission assists public health lab in performing influenza subtyping and/or whole genome sequencing
- Further characterization of influenza strains facilitates the tracking of disease trends, assists to develop effective communicable disease control strategies, and assists to ensure rapid public health response

Laboratory partnership and cooperation continues to greatly assist public health in achieving our mission to protect health, prevent disease, and promote health and well-being.

Actions Required for Los Angeles County Clinical Laboratories:

1. **Continue to report all Influenza results (positive, negative, indeterminate, and un-subtypable), from molecular and antigen assays per public health laboratory reporting requirements ([Title 17 CCR §2505](#)).**
2. **Submit remnant, previously tested Influenza A/B positive molecular specimens if and when requested by our lab as part of enhanced surveillance. This is to clarify the [LAHAN issued June 12, 2024](#).**
 - Specimen requirements for enhanced Influenza surveillance must be positive for Influenza A or B by **molecular** testing methods. Respiratory swab samples must have been collected in viral transport media/universal transport media using a synthetic swab
 - Remnant specimens should be stored and shipped frozen; Include a copy of your laboratory test result (with CT value if available) which will inform us of the Influenza type and/or subtype as well as patient demographics
 - Surveillance samples do not require a test request form as no result will be provided back to the clinical laboratory
 - If subtyping for diagnostic purposes is required, a [test request form](#) is needed.
 - Courier will be coordinated if your facility does not have a courier; If your facility already has a routine public health courier, please send remnant specimens with the regular pick-up from public health lab

3. If your laboratory performs Influenza molecular testing with subtyping and the result is un-subtypable, please send the specimen to the public health laboratory for confirmation.

- Confirmation of influenza subtype is diagnostic and requires a [test request form](#)
- STAT courier will be coordinated

4. Ensure the provider team reports any suspected case of novel, or avian Influenza to Public Health immediately for assistance with diagnostic testing and inform them of specimen requirements.

Los Angeles County Public Health Laboratory **requires all 3** of the following specimens for novel/avian influenza testing:

- A. Nasopharyngeal swab in viral/universal transport media
- B. Combo nasal/throat swab in viral/universal transport media
- C. Conjunctival swab in viral/universal transport media

Include test request form for each specimen type. [Test request forms](#) are available on the laboratory website. Write in Title 17/Other box “Avian Influenza” for the specific test requested.

Patients must meet [epidemiologic and clinical criteria](#) for testing. Criteria are available online at the CDC website and are subject to change.

Specimens must be stored refrigerated at 4-8°C and transported immediately to the public health laboratory for testing. STAT courier will be coordinated.

Additional Online Laboratory Resources and Guidance Information:

- [Los Angeles County Title 17 Laboratory Reportable List](#)
- [Los Angeles County Acute Communicable Disease Control](#)
- [CDC Information on Avian Influenza](#)
- [Biosafety Guidance](#)

Laboratory Contact Information:

[Los Angeles County Public Health Laboratories](#)

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Epidemiology Reporting Information:

Los Angeles County DPH Acute Communicable Disease Control:

- Weekdays 8:30 am–5:00 pm: call 213-240-7941.
- After-hours: call 213-974-1234 and ask for the physician on call.

Long Beach Health and Human Services:

- Weekdays 8:00 am-5:00 pm: call 562-570-4302.
- After hours: call the duty officer at 562-500-5537.

Pasadena Public Health Department:

- Weekdays 8:00 am-5:00 pm: call 626-744-6089.
- After hours: call 626-744-6043.