SPECIMEN COLLECTION
VIRAL SWABS (GREEN/RED TOP)

- All staff involved with the collection of specimens must have knowledge of and adhere to the Infection Prevention & Control guidelines

**NB. Please ensure you are using viral swabs and note expiry date as they have a short shelf life**

- All specimens should be collected using Standard Universal Precautions i.e. wearing of appropriate gloves, disposable plastic apron and washing and drying of hands before and after the procedure. For further detailed information see the Infection Prevention Control Guidelines

**NASOPHARYNGEAL VIRAL SWABS**

Nasopharyngeal swabs should be taken from 5 (maximum) most recently symptomatic patients only.

- Explain the procedure to the patient; obtain consent to take swab where possible - implied consent is acceptable and where consent cannot be obtained as the patient does not have capacity, records need to indicate that we are acting in the patient’s best interest. Ensure privacy while the procedure is being carried out.

1 Swab should be used for a sample from both nares (nostrils) and 1 swab for a sample from the throat (there are 2 swabs per container).

**Nose Swab**

- Move the swab from the anterior nares (front of the nostril) and direct it upwards into the tip of the nose.
- Gently turn the swab through several rotations.

**Throat Swab**

- Ensure visibility of the area to be swabbed - where practicable
- Quickly, but gently, swab the posterior pharyngeal wall (back of the throat)
- Make every effort to avoid touching any other area of the mouth or tongue with the swab if possible

Place both swabs into the tube containing the specimen transport medium (the swab stick needs to be snapped off) and firmly secure the cap.

- **Ensure patient details are completed in full on the swab container**

Place the samples into the sealable plastic bag and seal.

- **Complete the request form - ensure you include all of the following:**
  - Patient’s name
  - Date of birth and sex
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NHS number</th>
<th>GP name if applicable</th>
<th>Date and time of collection</th>
<th>Sample type i.e. viral swabs</th>
<th>Investigation type</th>
<th>Full Respiratory virus screen</th>
<th>Any antimicrobial medication being taken by the patient.</th>
<th>Date of onset of illness</th>
<th>Mark as suspected flu outbreak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- Place in the emergency sample transport containers and arrange for **urgent** collection by taxi or take over to pathology lab.

Ensure that the collection of specimens is recorded in the patient’s records. Place all PPE into clinical waste bag (orange) and dispose as clinical waste and decontaminate hands.

**Out of Hours**

Contact on call Microbiologist at your local acute Trust hospital to inform them that viral swabs are being sent due to a potential flu outbreak and will need to be transported to Addenbrooke’s.

**In hours:**

The Infection Prevention & Control Team will notify the local acute Trust.