

# Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Specimen Collection and Shipment

## North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health

The Communicable Disease Branch (919-733-3419) must approve testing for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) at NCSLPH prior to specimen collection. All HPAI specimens submitted to the NCSLPH must meet the testing criteria. HPAI guidance applies only to testing at the NCSLPH.

◆ *Failure to follow submission guidelines may result in specimen rejection.*

### Specimen Collection

- ◆ **All specimens must be collected in Viral Transport Media (VTM) Universal Transport Media (UTM)**
  - ◆ **Patient with respiratory symptoms only:**
    - Vial 1: Nasopharyngeal (NP) swab
    - Vial 2: Oropharyngeal swab AND Nasal swab (two swabs in one vial)
  - ◆ **Patient with conjunctivitis (with or without respiratory symptoms):**
    - Vial 1: Conjunctival swab
    - Vial 2: Nasopharyngeal (NP) swab
    - Vial 3: Oropharyngeal swab AND Nasal swab (two swabs in one vial)
- Use a synthetic tipped, sterile swab of appropriate size with a plastic or metal shaft. Do not use a calcium alginate swab or one with a wood shaft.
- ◆ **Label the vial containing the swab completely:**
    - Specimen Type
    - Patient Name
    - Date of Birth
    - Date of Collection
  - ◆ **Store properly until shipment:**
    - Refrigerate at 2-8° C for immediate shipment
    - Freeze ≤ -70° C for storage longer than 48 hours
  - ◆ **Completely fill out the [Virology submission form](#). Select “Influenza” and write “HPAI”.**

### Specimen Shipment

- ◆ **All specimens must be packaged [UN3373 Category B, Biological Substance](#)**
- ◆ **Call SLPH BTEP Duty Phone to coordinate sample shipment at 919-807-8600.**
- ◆ **Specimens MUST be received cold/frozen**
  - Specimens received <72 hours after collection must be shipped on frozen ice packs and received cold (2-8°C).
  - Specimens received >72 hours after collection must be shipped frozen on dry ice.
- ◆ **Label the package completely:**

**Attention: Virology/Serology Unit**  
North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health  
4312 District Drive  
Raleigh, NC 27607-5490

### Result Reporting

Results are posted electronically to the NCSLPH [Clinical and Environmental Lab Results](#) website associated with the submitter's EIN number. Visit the [NCSLPH website](#) for account setup and tutorials.

