

Pandemic H1N1 Influenza A

Autopsy Specimen Collection Guidelines

NL Public Health Laboratory

All severe cases and those hospitalized with suspected pandemic H1N1 are most likely to have had H1N1 testing. Therefore, in deaths with a lab confirmed H1N1 diagnosis, there may not be a need for additional H1N1 testing. However, if H1N1 diagnosis is not established or additional investigations are required in suspected deaths during the pandemic, it is recommended that appropriate specimens are collected and submitted to the PHL for testing.

Safety Precautions

Autopsies should be ideally performed in externally exhausted negative-pressure autopsy suites with 12 air exchanges/h, following routine infection control practices. Given the potential for aerosols, personal protective gear should include N95 respirator and goggles throughout the autopsy.

Recommended Specimens

Swabs – Collect each swab separately using UTM collection device

- Nasopharyngeal swab
- Oropharyngeal swab

Tissues – Collect each specimen separately in sterile containers with no preservative

- Trachea (proximal and distal)
- Bronchi (right and left primary)
- Lung (hilar region with segmental bronchi; representative tissue from left and right; areas with grossly visible abnormalities)
- Pleural tissue (representative tissue from right and left; areas with grossly visible abnormalities)

Other Specimens

- Any other specimens as appropriate may be collected

Refrigerate specimens until ready to be shipped. Specimens should be shipped as soon as possible preferably within 3 days.

For further information, please contact: 777 6535; 777 6536; 777 6568