

Protocol4:

Sample aliquoting, packaging and transportation

Type of specimen acceptable for detection of influenza

Properly collected respiratory specimens include:

- Throat Swab
- Nasal Swab
- Sputum
- Nasopharyngeal or Oropharyngeal aspirates
- Tracheal Aspirates

Collection, packaging and transportation of samples

Collection:

- **Sample should be collected in 1 to 2 ml VTM*** (viral transport medium, also available commercially) contained in a 5 or 10 ml vial.
- Swab specimens should be collected only on **swabs with a synthetic tip (such as polyester or dacron^R)** and an aluminum or plastic shaft.
- Swabs with cotton tips and wooden handles should **not** be used.

+ (For VTM constitution see Annex-1)

Packaging:

- Triple layer packaging is advisable.
- Tube containing samples in VTM should be wrapped around with the tissue paper and then tied with a rubber band. This is the primary container.
- It should then be placed in a zip lock bag which serves as the secondary container.
- Another ziplock bag should contain the case investigation details and history sheet of the patient.
- The secondary container along with the history Ziploc is then placed in the tertiary container which could be a cool-box/vaccine carrier with ice-packs. A set of four ice-packs maintains refrigeration for up to 48 hours.

Transportation:

- Triple layer packed samples should be transported as quickly as possible, in cold condition to the testing lab.