Respiratory virus PCR

Respiratory screen including
1) Influenza A including H1N1 (avian types: contact lab)
2) Influenza B
3) Parainfluenza viruses 1,2,3
4) Respiratory syncytial virus
5) Metapneumovirus
6) Adenovirus
7) Rhinovirus

General information

Specimen type and container:

- Nose and/or throat swab (virus transport medium)
- BAL/Sputum (sterile container)
- NPA (Sterile container)

Specimen transport: Ambient or refrigerated

Minimum volume of sample: Minimum volume 500µl

Special precautions: For avian flu please contact the laboratory with full travel history

Laboratory information

Measurement units: Threshold cycle (CT)

Biological reference units: Not applicable

Turnaround time for provisional result (working days): 2 days
Turnaround time to final result (working days): 3 days

Clinical information

Clinical decision points: Not applicable

Factors known to significantly affect the results: All samples are suitable for overnight refrigeration only, they must not be stored over a weekend

False negative results may occur for a variety of reasons, for example inappropriate timing of sample collection, inappropriate sample, presence of virus below the detectable limit of the assay. New and emerging variants may also occur which may not be detected by this assay. Towards the limit of detection of an assay sampling variation will result in lower reproducibility.

In order to provide the most clinically beneficial, operationally efficient and cost effective service the laboratory employs a number of multiplex assays and testing algorithms, which are based on UK Standards for Microbiology Investigations; it is normal practice to use these even when not all tests within the multiplex or algorithm are requested.

It is our policy to report all results along with the requested result to provide as much information as possible to aid diagnosis

During an outbreak of Influenza the laboratory offers a more rapid test (4 hours). The test detects influenza A, B and RSV.

Specimen type: Only nasopharyngeal (NP) swabs and nasopharyngeal aspirates (NPA) collected from patients with signs and symptoms of respiratory infection

Specimen container: Nasopharyngeal (NP) swabs should be collected into a laboratory approved virus transport medium. Nasopharyngeal aspirates should be collected into a laboratory approved container.

Any interference with the extraction and amplification of influenza A, B and RSV in any given patient sample will be identified by a negative result for the internal control. These will then be re-tested and reported as 'Sample inhibitory for respiratory PCR'.

(Last updated February 2019)