

## How to do an NP Swab

(Updated April 28, 2009)

Adapted from Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) Bureau of Laboratories INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMISSION OF SPECIMENS FOR VIRUS ISOLATION AND VIRAL PCR

([http://www.michigan.gov/documents/DCH-0772\\_7497\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/DCH-0772_7497_7.pdf), accessed April 27, 2009)

### NP Swabs are required for swine flu testing at MDCH

1. Use swabs with a synthetic tip (e.g., polyester or Dacron®) and an aluminum or plastic shaft. Swabs with cotton tips and wooden shafts are not recommended. Specimens collected with swabs made of calcium alginate are not acceptable.
2. Select an unobstructed nostril.
3. Provide the patient with tissues. Instruct them to blow their nose to remove mucus. A second tissue may be needed for watery eyes.
4. Position the person's head leaning gently back (about 70°) against a wall.
5. Aseptically remove the sterile flexible swab from package.
6. Hold swab lightly between the thumb and index finger thus allowing a quick release in the event the patient moves.
7. Place the swab in the nostril and gently follow the septum beyond the external nares. If any resistance to insertion occurs, **STOP** immediately to prevent injury.
8. In an adult, the swab should be inserted 4-6 cm or approximately 2/3 of the length of the swab.
9. Rotate the swab gently in place for a few seconds to absorb cells.
10. Withdraw the swab and insert into transport vial. Rotate swab in the transport medium. Express swab by pressing it against the side of the vial and discard swab properly.

