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## Guidance on Conjunctival Swab Collection for Potential Influenza A(H5N1) Testing:

1. Use a flocked swab with a flexible shaft, such as a nasopharyngeal swab, to sample the conjunctiva. Universal transport medium (UTM) or viral transport medium (VTM) should be used for specimen collection.
  - Perform hand hygiene and don task-appropriate PPE, including a gown, gloves, face mask or N95 respirator, and face shield.
  - NOTE: a thorough risk-assessment should inform what PPE to use. Follow hospital infection control guidelines for patient management and isolation, if indicated.
2. If using a Universal Transport Medium (UTM) or viral transport medium (VTM) collection kit, remove the sample tube and swab from the kit.
3. Remove the swab from its package. **Do not touch the swab tip or the swab shaft below the red score line on the shaft.**
4. Reflect back the lower eyelid of the affected eye and roll the swab across the conjunctiva.
5. Open the tube of transport medium and place the swab into the medium. Break the swab shaft at the red score line.
6. Cap the tube and label it with the patient's name, date of birth, collection date and time, and initials of the collector. Alternatively, apply a patient label (e.g., one generated by the healthcare/laboratory information system) to the tube.
7. Place the specimen in a zip-seal biohazard specimen bag and transport to the laboratory immediately after collection.
8. Store and transport the specimen according to the instructions provided by the Nebraska Department of Health and Humans Services and NPHL.

**For any questions regarding conjunctival swab collection or submission, please contact NPHL at 402-559-2440.**

These instructions are an amalgamation of those given in the following references:

1. *Clinical Microbiology Procedures Handbook, 5th Edition*. 2023. ASM Press.
2. Leal SM, Rodino KG, Fowler WC, Gilligan PH. 2021. Practical guidance for clinical microbiology laboratories: diagnosis of ocular infections. *Clin Microbiol Rev.* 34(3): e00070-19. PMID: 34076493.

For more information you may view this free tutorial offered by Copan: "How to Use Copan's Flocked Swabs (FLOQSwabs™) Eye Specimen Collection (Viral or Bacterial)":

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GnxrJ\\_Yhvlk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GnxrJ_Yhvlk)

- This video is intended for nurses, lab technicians and other clinical staff, and provides simple step-by-step instructions for using Copan's flocked swabs