

PHSA Laboratories

BCCDC Public Health Laboratory

September 23, 2022

Respiratory Virus Laboratory Testing Practices and Guidelines for 2022/2023 Season

SARS-CoV-2, Influenza and RSV

SARS-CoV-2, influenza A, influenza B and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) testing will be performed on specimens when requested as per routine seasonal practice. Starting in October, microbiology laboratories throughout BC will perform multiplex testing for the above viruses, where feasible and where not done already. This means that a sample submitted for SARS-CoV-2 testing will also be tested for influenza A virus, for example.

SARS-CoV-2/influenza A/ influenza B/RSV testing is routinely recommended only for individuals:

1. Who are pregnant,
2. In a Long-Term Care (LTC) facility,
3. Who are part of an outbreak investigation,
4. Hospitalized or ill enough to be hospitalized,
5. Aged <5 years.

If SARS-CoV-2/influenza A/influenza B/RSV NAT testing on samples is negative, and further investigation is required, additional testing using an extended respiratory pathogen panel for a wide range of respiratory pathogens is available upon request.

Yoccon Swab Expiry

The Yoccon Virus Sampling Kit (BND product code STC-110), labeled with an expiry date of 2021 or earlier is expiring. This kit previously had an extension to its period of validity but will no longer be accepted for testing beyond November 3, 2022. The replacement for this swab is the COPAN (red-top) Nasopharyngeal FLOQSwab with Universal transport Media.

Lab ILI form

Please do NOT fax/submit the Influenza-Like Illness Outbreak Laboratory form (ILI form). Please continue to complete and submit the [**Influenza-Like Illness \(ILI\) Outbreak Summary Report Form \(ILI Summary form\).**](#)

Enterovirus D68

Enterovirus-D68 (EV-D68) has re-emerged this season (enteroviruses typically circulate from late summer to early fall, before other respiratory viruses). Starting in late September, the BCCDC Public Health Laboratory will perform a specific EV-D68 PCR on enterovirus positive respiratory samples from persons aged <=18 years, for surveillance purposes. Some retrospective testing for EV-D68 on a subset of samples has also occurred, dating back to collections from August 1, 2022.

EV-D68 can also be requested for suspected cases (such as in cases of children presenting with neurological features such as acute flaccid myelitis) by consulting with the BCCDC Medical Microbiologist on call (604-661-7033) and when requests are outside enterovirus season.

Other Resources

Weekly respiratory virus testing and positive counts for BC are reported to PHAC via FluWatch and can be found here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/flu-influenza/influenza-surveillance/weekly-influenza-reports.html>

BC-specific influenza surveillance bulletins are routinely produced by the BCCDC and can be found here: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/data-reports/communicable-diseases/influenza-surveillance-reports>.

ILI Outbreak summary report form: http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Forms/Epid/Influenza%20and%20Respiratory/OutbreakReportForm_2018.pdf

For other testing details, please refer to the BCCDC Public Health Laboratory test menu on eLab: <http://www.elabhandbook.info/phsa/>

For information on EV-D68 in the US: <https://emergency.cdc.gov/han/2022/han00474.asp>

For information on EV-D68 associated acute flaccid myelitis in the US: <https://www.cdc.gov/acute-flaccid-myelitis/cases-in-us.html>

Sincerely,



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