

Accelerated Subtyping of Influenza A in Hospitalized Patients Health Advisory January 22, 2025

Situational Update

Amid high levels of seasonal influenza and sporadic human cases of avian influenza A(H5), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued a health advisory to clinicians and laboratories to **expedite the subtyping of all influenza A positive specimens among hospitalized patients, especially among those in the intensive care unit (ICU)**, in order to support optimal patient care, timely infection control, and case investigation.

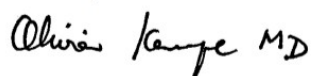
Actions Requested of Clinicians and Laboratories

1. Implement appropriate infection control measures if influenza is suspected. If avian influenza is suspected or confirmed, place the patient in an airborne isolation room with negative pressure and follow standard, contact, and airborne precautions with eye protection (goggles or face shield).
2. Test for seasonal influenza A in hospitalized patients with suspected seasonal influenza or novel influenza A infection using available diagnostic tests.
3. Inquire about exposures to wild and domestic animals (e.g., cats), animal products (e.g., poultry, dairy cows, raw cow milk or raw cow milk products, raw meat-based pet food), or close contact with a symptomatic person with A(H5).
4. Subtype positive influenza A specimens for seasonal influenza A viruses [A(H1) and A(H3)] **within 24 hours** if possible. Note: Only molecular tests (PCR, NAAT) can be further used for subtyping.
 - If the specimen is negative for seasonal influenza viruses [both A(H1) and A(H3)], notify Sacramento County Public Health as soon as possible by phone at (916) 875-5881 for confirmatory testing at the Sacramento County Public Health Laboratory (SCPHL).
 - If subtyping is not available at the facility, coordinate testing with SCPHL by calling (916) 875-5881. **SCPHL will only subtype specimens that were positive for influenza A from hospitalized patients, prioritizing those admitted to the ICU. Indicate hospitalization status, including ICU, on the test requisition form.** Note: Coordinate testing with commercial labs (currently LabCorp) for non-hospitalized patients if subtyping is needed.
5. Treat hospitalized patients, especially those in the ICU, with suspected seasonal influenza or avian influenza A(H5) with antivirals (oseltamivir) as soon as possible without waiting for influenza test results.

For additional information, please see the following links:

- Accelerated Subtyping of Influenza A in Hospitalized Patients (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/han/2025/han00520.html>
- H5 Bird Flu: Current Situation (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/bird-flu/situation-summary/index.html>
- Current Bird Flu Situation (CDPH): <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Bird-Flu.aspx>

Sincerely,



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Public Health Officer