



**SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC HEALTH**



This is an official
DPH Health Advisory

On July 1, 2024, the S.C. Department of Health & Environmental Control (DHEC) became two separate agencies: S.C. Department of Environmental Services (SCDES) and S.C. Department of Public Health (DPH).

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**Accelerated Influenza A Subtyping in Hospitalized Patients –
South Carolina supplement**

Summary

While the CDC considers the risk from avian influenza A(H5) viruses to the public to be low, it continues to closely monitor this dynamic situation. Currently, seasonal influenza levels are high nationally and nearly all people who are hospitalized with influenza A virus infections have a seasonal strain of the influenza virus. To assist in the national surveillance for Influenza A(H5N1) infections, CDC is asking laboratories to accelerate the subtyping of Influenza A viruses detected in hospitalized patients.

Hospitals are now encouraged to subtype specimens from hospitalized patients with influenza A infection within 24 hours of a positive Influenza A test result (NAAT or rapid antigen). Several assays are able to subtype Influenza A: BioFire Respiratory Panel (2.1 and EZ 2.1), Genmark ePlex Respiratory Pathogen Panel 2, and QIAstat-Dx Respiratory SARS-CoV-2 Panel. If hospital laboratories do not have subtyping capacity, specimens can be sent to the S.C. Public Health Laboratory (PHL) or to a commercial laboratory (Quest, LabCorp, ARUP, etc.) for subtyping.

Specimens that are Influenza A, unsubtypeable in the hospital laboratory or specimens from someone with a possible H5N1 exposure should be directed to the Special Pathogens laboratory at the PHL or a commercial laboratory that offers H5 subtyping (Quest, ARUP, Labcorp). These cases should also be reported immediately by phone to the regional epidemiologist in your region (contact info below) who can assist. Information about current risk and exposures can be found at [CDC- Current H5N1 Situation Summary](#).

DPH contact information for reportable diseases and reporting requirements

Reporting of **Influenza, Influenza hospitalizations, and Avian or novel influenza** is consistent with South Carolina Law requiring the reporting of diseases and conditions to your state or local public health department. (State Law # 44-29-10 and Regulation # 61-20) as per the [DPH 2025 List of Reportable Conditions](#).

Federal HIPAA legislation allows disclosure of protected health information, without consent of the individual, to public health authorities to collect and receive such information for the purpose of preventing or controlling disease. (HIPAA 45 CFR §164.512).

Regional Public Health Offices – 2025			
Mail or call reports to the Epidemiology Office in each Public Health Region			
MAIL TO:			
<u>Lowcountry</u> 3685 Rivers Avenue, Suite 201 N. Charleston, SC 29405 Fax: (843) 953-0051	<u>Midlands</u> 2000 Hampton Street Columbia, SC 29204 Fax: (803) 251-3170	<u>Pee Dee</u> 1931 Industrial Park Road Conway, SC 29526 Fax: (843) 915-6506	<u>Upstate</u> 352 Halton Road Greenville, SC 29607 Fax: (864) 282-4373
CALL TO:			
<u>Lowcountry</u> Allendale, Bamberg, Beaufort, Berkeley, Calhoun, Charleston, Colleton, Dorchester, Hampton, Jasper, Orangeburg Office: (843) 441-1091 Nights/Weekends: (843) 441-1091	<u>Midlands</u> Aiken, Barnwell, Chester, Edgefield, Fairfield, Kershaw, Lancaster, Lexington, Newberry, Richland, Saluda, York Office: (888) 801-1046 Nights/Weekends: (888) 801-1046	<u>Pee Dee</u> Clarendon, Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Georgetown, Horry, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, Sumter, Williamsburg Office: (843) 915-8886 Nights/Weekends: (843) 409-0695	<u>Upstate</u> Abbeville, Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Oconee, Pickens, Spartanburg, Union Office: (864) 372-3133 Nights/Weekends: (864) 423-6648
For information on reportable conditions, see dph.sc.gov/professionals/health-professionals/sc-list-reportable-conditions		<u>DPH Bureau of Communicable Disease Prevention & Control</u> Communicable Disease Epidemiology Section 2100 Bull St • Columbia, SC 29201 Phone: (803) 898-0861 • Fax: (803) 898-0897 Nights / Weekends: 1-888-847-0902	

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert	Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.
Health Advisory	Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.
Health Update	Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.
Info Service	Provides general information that is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.

Requesting Influenza A Subtyping at the Public Health Laboratory (PHL)

Submitting Specimens to PHL for Rapid Influenza A Subtyping (no known exposure history)

The PHL provides collection and shipping supplies as needed. For questions, please contact the PHL Virology Laboratory at (803) 896-0820 or Virology_Lab@dph.sc.gov.

1. Complete the 1335 Submission Form.
 - Include **Rapid Flu Subtyping** in the Special Instructions and/or Comments box.
 - Under **Virology**, select **Influenza RT-PCR** and **In-patient**
2. Place the specimen in a biohazard bag and follow packaging instructions below. Specimens must be packaged in an approved insulated shipping container. Place a completed submission form inside the shipper but outside the specimen biohazard bag.
 - Cold Shipping: Specimens collected less than 72 hours prior to submission may be stored and shipped at 2 – 8°C. Surround the specimen biohazard bag with 2 – 3 pre-frozen ice packs.
 - Frozen Shipping: Specimens collected more than 72 hours prior to submission must be stored and shipped frozen ($\leq -20^{\circ}\text{C}$). Specimens less than 72 hours may also be shipped frozen. Surround the specimen biohazard bag with dry ice.
3. Ship specimens to the address below:

SC DPH Virology Laboratory
8231 Parklane Road
Columbia, SC 29223
Attention: Rapid Flu Subtyping

Submitting Specimens to PHL for H5 Subtyping (known exposure history or positive Influenza A specimens testing negative for H1 and H3 subtypes)

For questions and specimen guidance, please contact the PHL Special Pathogens Laboratory at (803) 896-0777 or email the Special Pathogens Unit Manager at mooreal@dph.sc.gov.

1. Complete the 1335 Submission Form.
 - Designate **H5 Subtyping** in the Special Instructions and/or Comments box.
 - Under **Special Pathogens-Molecular testing for Viral Pathogens**, select **Avian Influenza**
2. Place the specimen(s) in a biohazard bag and follow the packaging instructions below. Specimens must be packaged in a UN certified shipping container. Place a completed submission form and the itemized list of contents inside the outer box but outside of the Styrofoam box.
 - Cold Shipping: Specimens collected less than 72 hours prior to submission may be stored and shipped at 2 – 8°C. Surround the specimen biohazard bag with 2 – 3 pre-frozen ice packs.
 - Frozen Shipping: Specimens collected more than 72 hours prior to submission must be stored and shipped frozen ($\leq -20^{\circ}\text{C}$). Specimens less than 72 hours may also be shipped frozen. Surround the specimen biohazard bag with dry ice.
3. Ship specimens to the address below:

SC DPH
Special Pathogen Laboratory
8231 Parklane Road
Columbia, SC 29223
Attention: Flu Subtyping