

Interim Guidance for Clinicians on Testing, Evaluation, and Infection Prevention in the Management of Patients with Suspected Novel Respiratory Infections: Influenza A H7N9 and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) December 2015

Note: This is an interim guidance. The most up-to-date version is available at:
<http://public.health.oregon.gov/DiseasesConditions/DiseasesAZ/MERS/Documents/MERS-CoV-Testing.pdf>

1. BACKGROUND

Every year is, alas, a bad flu year. Currently however, there are two conditions, Influenza A H7N9 and MERS-CoV, that may require special attention. Here is the low-down on recommended testing and specimen collection to diagnose these pathogens, followed by basic information on infection control precautions. For guidance on identifying patients who meet the *Patient under Investigation* definitions for these infections and therefore require testing, see:

<http://public.health.oregon.gov/DiseasesConditions/DiseasesAZ/MERS/Documents/MERS-CoV-Recognizing.pdf>

Laboratory testing for MERS and H7N9 is conducted by the Oregon State Public Health Lab (OSPHL) or by CDC, via OSPHL. Contact your local health department immediately to report suspected cases and to help coordinate specimen transport.

2. INFLUENZA A H7N9

2.1 Diagnostic Testing

To test for H7N9 flu in patients who meet the following *Case under Investigation* definition:
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/h7n9/case-definitions.htm>

- Contact your local health department about the need for testing. All testing must have prior approval before specimen arrival at OSPHL.
- Obtain specimens as soon as possible after illness onset, ideally within 7 days
- **Note:** Rapid influenza tests may not be sensitive enough to detect this infection, and cannot determine virus subtype. If H7N9 or another novel flu strain is suspected, send samples for testing at OSPHL, even if rapid flu testing is negative.

MERS-CoV: Testing-Clinician Guidance

- For influenza specimen collection and transport information, see: <http://public.health.oregon.gov/LaboratoryServices/SubmittingSamples/Pages/submittin-g-flu.aspx>
- Coordinate shipping to OSPHL through your local health department.

3. MIDDLE EAST RESPIRATORY SYNDROME CORONAVIRUS (MERS-CoV)

3.1 Diagnostic Testing

To test for MERS-CoV in people meeting the following *Patient under Investigation* definition: <http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/mers/case-def.html>

- Call your local health department immediately to let them know about the possible MERS case and to arrange testing and shipping of specimens
- For MERS specimen collection and transport information, see: <http://public.health.oregon.gov/LaboratoryServices/Pages/test.aspx?TestID=396>
- Coordinate shipping to OSPHL through your local health department

4. ISOLATION PRECAUTIONS

In any suspect, probable or confirmed case of MERS-CoV or Influenza A H7N9:

- Use Standard, Contact, and Airborne Precautions.
- Use of an Airborne Infection Isolation Room (AIIR) is recommended.
- If this isn't available, arrange for transfer to facility with an AIIR; in the meantime:
 - Have patient wear a facemask
 - Isolate patient in exam room or single-patient room with the door closed.

RESOURCES

- For guidance on home care for ill persons with suspected MERS, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/mers/hcp/home-care.html>
- For more information about MERS-CoV, personal protective equipment, and infection control, visit: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/mers/infection-prevention-control.html
- For more information about H7N9, personal protective equipment, and infection control, visit: www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/h7n9-infection-control.htm