

# LAB ALERT

## RESPIRATORY VIRAL TESTING IN **PEAK INFLUENZA SEASON**

### Clinical Diagnosis:

Majority of older adolescents and adults with abrupt onset of fever (>37.8C/100F) and cough within two days of presentation can be clinically diagnosed with influenza (**63% sensitivity**).

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Rapid Kit Test: Test available 24 hours daily; results available in 30 to 60 minutes. If rapid kit test desired, must call laboratory.

### **\*Sensitivity depends on age of patient**

- < Five years old: sensitivity is 84%
- Six to 20 years old: sensitivity is 56%
- 21 to 50 years old: sensitivity is 43%
- > 50 years old: sensitivity is 33%

Manufacturers recommend that negative results be confirmed by culture.

**\*\*All hospitalized patients with negative rapid tests will have a RVP performed\*\***

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Rapid DFA Test: Test can be ordered 24 hours daily; results available in 2 hours if specimen received by 2:00 p.m., after 2:00 p.m., results available the following morning.

**\*Sensitivity is 90%**

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Viral Culture (RVP): RVP is the “Gold Standard” ∴ **\*sensitivity assumed to be 100%**; We find 50% of positives at 24 hours; remaining positives at 48 hours (final negatives at 4 days).

**\*PLEASE NOTE:** Best specimen is a nasopharyngeal aspirate/wash obtained within 3 days of symptoms by personnel trained and technically proficient in this collection method. Testing of throat or nose swabs may result in reduction of stated sensitivity.