

Title: Summer Monitoring for Novel Influenza A Virus Infections: Clinical and Laboratory Recommendations

As the multistate outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in poultry, dairy cattle, and other animals continues and fair season begins, monitoring for novel influenza A virus infections in humans is critical to understanding whether these viruses are moving from animals to humans and spreading between humans. Rapid detection of, and treatment for, novel influenza A viruses prevents severe disease and limits the emergence of new viruses with pandemic potential. **Testing for influenza viruses and monitoring for novel influenza A virus infections should continue year-round.**

Recommendations for Clinicians

All patients seeking care for influenza-like illness outside of the influenza season should be asked about pig exposure, agricultural fair attendance, and contact with wild birds, poultry, or dairy cattle with known or suspected avian influenza virus infection. Patients who report pig exposure, fair attendance, or contact with wild birds or ill animals should have nasopharyngeal, nasal, and oropharyngeal swabs collected in viral transport medium for molecular testing at Oregon State Public Health Laboratory (OSPHL). Patient with eye irritation should have a [conjunctival swab](#) collected as well.

Empiric antiviral treatment for influenza (i.e., oseltamivir) should be started as soon as possible on all patients with risk factors for novel influenza viruses (pig exposure, fair attendance, or contact with wild birds or ill animals) and should not be delayed pending laboratory testing. For information on dosing and duration of antiviral therapy, see CDC's [Interim Guidance on the Use of Antiviral Medications for Treatment of Human Infections with Novel Influenza A Viruses Associated with Severe Human Disease](#).

Recommendations for Laboratories

Oregon Health Authority (OHA) continues to ask that Oregon hospital laboratories submit all influenza-positive specimens from hospitalized patients to OSPHL for subtyping to bolster surveillance for novel influenza, including HPAI or 'bird flu'. In addition, under Oregon Administrative Rule 333-018-0015, all laboratories in Oregon are required to report (and submit) all influenza-positive specimens exhibiting atypical features (i.e., 'unsubtypeable' specimens) to OHA by phone immediately, day or night, at 971-673-1111. Unsubtypeable specimens are influenza A-positive specimens which are not able to be subtyped despite having been tested with an assay designed to provide an influenza subtyping result.

Additional resources

[Guidance for submitting specimens for 2024-25 influenza surveillance](#)

[OHA's avian influenza website](#)

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