

# Memo

**To:** CVH Nursing and Physician staff

**From:** Kenneth I. Freedman, M.D., MBA, FASAM,  
Medical Director, Ambulatory Care Services and  
Chair, Infection Control Committee  
Laurie Wassil, RN, CIC,  
Infection Control Practitioner and  
Co-chair, Infection Control Committee

**Date:** 3/6/06

**Re:** Problems with Rapid Influenza Testing

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On the rapid influenza swab testing, we have noted that many of our patients are testing negative, but coming back with positive culture results the next day. Therefore, with any patient whom you suspect has an influenza infection (acute febrile illness with fever/myalgias/cough), you should:

- 1) Notify the Infection Control Practitioner (available 24/7) to assess which infection control measures (e.g., education regarding hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, reporting of symptoms, cultures, Tamiflu, patient movement, staff movement) should be implemented.
- 2) Obtain a nasopharyngeal swab for rapid testing and culture.
- 3) If you start the patient on Tamiflu; await a negative culture result prior to stopping the Tamiflu and respiratory precautions.
- 4) After 24 hours of Tamiflu, culture positive patients are no longer infectious.

The results of the viral culture should be available within 24 hours. The lab will contact the unit directly for any positive result; the unit nurse should immediately notify the physician. Given the resistance of this year's virus strain, Amantadine should NOT be used. Tamiflu is available for the treatment of influenza A and should begin within the first two days of illness onset.

For any further clarification, please contact the lab @ x6760, Laurie Wassil @ x5419, or Ken Freedman @ x5104.

cc: Barbara Forgit, RN, CNA, MPA, Director of ACS  
Cynthia Conrad, MD, PhD, COPS  
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