

To ensure accurate diagnosis of viral disease, it is imperative to collect the correct specimen. The specimen should reflect the system(s) involved in clinical disease and should be collected during the acute phase of infection when viral concentration is at its maximum. Refer to the following information when selecting appropriate specimens for testing.

### **Instructions for Specimen Collection by type**

All specimens should be collected immediately upon onset of clinical symptoms or death of the animal.

- **Feces:** Place 2-4 grams inside a sterile sealed container
- **Rectal swab:** Insert swab 4-6 cm and roll against mucosa. Place swab in 1-2 ml of sterile saline.
- **Vesicle or lesion swab:** Open lesion carefully using a sterile instrument. Moisten a sterile swab with sterile saline or other transport media and collect cells from open lesion. Place swab in 1-2 ml of sterile saline.
- **Ocular swab:** Collect from lower conjunctiva using a swab moistened with sterile saline. Place swab in 1-2 ml of sterile saline.
- **Corneal or conjunctiva scraping:** Place scraping in 1-2 ml of sterile saline.
- **Nasal swab:** Swab nostrils separately and place swabs in 1-2 ml of sterile saline.
- **\*Nasopharyngeal swab:** Insert sterile swab through nostril into nasopharynx and rotate several times. Remove and place swab in 1-2 ml of sterile saline.
- **Oropharyngeal/Throat swab:** Swab posterior throat and tonsil area and place swab in 1-2 ml of sterile saline.
- **\*Nasal Aspirate:** Insert suction device through nostrils into nasopharynx. Aspirate fluid while removing suction device. Flush device with sterile saline and collect in a sealed container.
- **Serum:** Collect in red top tube. Centrifuge and remove from clot if possible.
- **Whole blood:** Collect in EDTA (purple top) tube.
- **CSF:** Collect in sterile container.
- **Tissue:** Place in sterile container or plastic bag with a small amount of sterile saline to keep moist.
- **Semen:** Collect in semen straw and transfer immediately into liquid nitrogen.
- \* *Swab specimens generally contain fewer virus particles than aspirates and washes. However, if a swab is the preferred specimen, nasopharyngeal swabs are preferable to anterior nasal or throat swabs.*

### **Storage and Shipment of Clinical Specimens**

All specimens should be stored in sterile containers and refrigerated immediately upon collection. Ship with enough ice packs sufficient to maintain an approximate 4°C environment.

NEVER send dry swabs.