Respiratory Synctial Virus (RSV) Specimen Collection

WHY IS THIS TEST DONE:
RSV testing detects the presence of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) in nasal secretions. RSV is a common viral respiratory infection that tends to be seasonal, causing community epidemics in young children, older adults, and in the immunocompromised. Outbreaks typically begin in November or December and disappear in early spring. In these high-risk groups, RSV can cause pneumonia and bronchiolitis.

RSV testing detects virus that is being shed in the respiratory/nasal secretions of an infected person. Since detectable amounts of virus are usually only shed for the first few days of an infection, most testing must be done during this time. There are several methods to test for the virus, but rapid RSV antigen testing is by far the most popular. The sample is collected and sent to a laboratory for a more sensitive testing method. Results of these RSV tests are usually available the same day.

WHAT TO EXPECT:
The patient will arrive at the hospital and enter at the main entrance. The patient will report in to register and review insurance. The patient should have a copy of the orders as a precaution. The patient will be brought back to the department where we will confirm the patient’s identity, explain the procedure, and review their history.

Specimen Collection

NP Swab: Insert tipped swab through the nostril rotate swab, remove and place swab into sterile tube to be sent to microbiology lab located at El Paso Children’s Hospital.

Nasal Wash: A small bulb aspirator applied though the nose while patients head is tilted back sterile water is then inserted while suctioning slowly removing aspirator tip. The aspirator continents will be flushed and place the specimen into a container to be sent to microbiology lab. *Nasal Wash is the preferred method for RSV specimen collection.*
HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?
Please arrive 15 minutes prior to your scheduled appointment for registration and insurance purposes. The collection will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete.

PREPARATION:
Patient is to postpone eating 30 minutes prior to collection.
Patient is to thoroughly clear nose of any present nasal congestion prior to collection.

PRECAUTIONS:
There is no significant difference between using nasal wash and nasopharyngeal wash methods for collecting specimen for RSV testing. Nasal wash is a safe and accurate method for obtaining specimen for RSV.

CONTRAINDICATIONS:
Nosebleed may occur.

MEDICATION ISSUES:
None