

Influenza testing guidelines

Influenza Antigen (6696/87804.0)

When to order the Influenza Antigen:

- Test in only available during influenza season, October 1st – May 31st, due to the increased false positive results of the antigen test when disease prevalence is low.
- Non-seriously ill outpatient
- Influenza prevalence is high

Reliability and interpretation of the Influenza Antigen:

- As compared to RT-PCR, the influenza antigen test has a positive percent agreement of 81-86% and a negative percent agreement of 97-99%.
- When influenza prevalence in the community is low, false positive (and true negative) results are more likely to occur
- When influenza prevalence is high, false negative (and true positive) results are more likely to occur

Influenza A/B PCR (8810/LAB8810)

When to order the Influenza A/B/H1N1 PCR:

- Inpatients
- ED patients being admitted
- Seriously ill patients
- Off season (June 1st – September 30th) when the Influenza Antigen test is unavailable for non-seriously ill outpatients.

If clinically indicated, consider the Influenza A/B PCR after screening with the Influenza Antigen *if*:

- The **Influenza Antigen is positive** when the influenza **prevalence is low** (rule out false positive antigen test)
- The **Influenza Antigen is negative** when the influenza **prevalence is high** (rule out false negative antigen test)