Specimen Collection: Throat Swab

Procedure
1. Equipment
   • Tongue depressor (spatula)
   • Swab sticks (“orange” stick with cotton swab)
   • Viral Transport Medium (VTM)

2. Provide explanation and obtains consent from parents and/or patients.

3. Get a swab stick for use readily.

4. Instruct the patient to open his mouth widely.

5. Use tongue depressor to depress the tongue slightly to allow easier access to pharynx.

   *If the patient is cooperative, may try to get him to say “ah”*

6. Put a swab stick into oral cavity and swab the lateral wall of pharynx (i.e “tonsillar” area) without touching the buccal mucosa or tongue.

7. Remove the swab stick from the oral cavity carefully without touching the buccal mucosa or tongue.

8. Put the swab stick immediately into VTM

9. Note:
   • One VTM for one swab stick only
   • Immerse cotton end (cotton swab) completely in VTM
   • Break the swab stick adequately to fit into the VTM tube
   • Seal VTM tube properly to avoid leakage
   • Label the specimen and fill in laboratory form completely and accurately
   • Transport to laboratory as soon as possible
   • *If unable to send to laboratory immediately, keep specimen at 4 °C*