



Cornell University
Animal Health Diagnostic Center

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Subject: 2009H1N1 Influenza testing in cats, dogs, ferrets, or other species

We are fielding many questions regarding whether or not species found to be susceptible to some other influenza types, such as dogs, cats, ferrets, horses, or pet birds, might be susceptible to the novel 2009H1N1 virus circulating in the human population. The 2009H1N1 influenza has been confirmed in one or more ferrets and in a cat.

Susceptibility of species other than pigs, ferrets and cats has not been determined. The USDA has determined that poultry species appear resistant to infection, although the virus has caused infection in a flock of turkeys in Canada. All of these infections appear to be transmission events from people to animals. At this time, it is more likely that people will serve as a source of virus causing infection and illness in their pets than the reverse situation.

The AHDC's Influenza Matrix PCR assay is capable of detecting novel H1N1 virus, but additional testing would be required to determine the specific influenza type. A careful history should always be provided if animal illness is associated with human illness or illness in other species. Please see the document titled "Appropriate Samples for Detecting the Presence of Canine Influenza Virus" (attached; <http://diagcenter.vet.cornell.edu/pdf/CIV-Samp.pdf>) for instructions on collecting samples. These instructions are appropriate for 2009H1N1 testing, also.

The PCR test is most appropriate for acutely ill animals in the first couple days of fever or illness. Serological evidence of infection by antibody detection (Influenza HI test) is more appropriate for animals with prolonged clinical signs or convalescent cases.

For very small animals from which it is difficult or impossible to collect good nasal swabs, pharyngeal swabs may be substituted for the PCR test. Swabs should be placed in an empty red top tube with a few drops of sterile saline or in viral transport media (available from the AHDC by request). **DO NOT PLACE SWABS IN ANY BACTERIAL TRANSPORT MEDIAS OR CULTURE SYSTEMS.**