NASOPHARYNGEAL OR NASAL SWAB COLLECTION PROCEDURE FOR EHV 1 & 4 AND RELATED DISEASES

Supplies Needed

- Dacron Swabs with plastic sticks 5—7 inches (often supplied with bacterial transport media)
- Plain red top tube (blood tube, no additive) or viral transport media
- A few milliliters sterile saline
- Clean exam gloves
- Disinfectant material or commercially available disinfectant wipes

Procedure

1. The horse should be restrained sufficiently to introduce swab in a manner safe for horse and attending personnel. Pass the swab(s) along the left or right ventral meatus being careful to avoid the false nostril (nasal diverticulum), until you are in the horse's nasal passage. Rotate the swab to increase the collection of respiratory secretions for at least 5 seconds. Two swabs can be done at the same time if more than one sample is needed by the laboratory. Some labs request one sample for qPCR and one for viral isolation. Swabs that contain large amounts of environmental dirt after collection (from horses being kept on a dry lot or in a dusty environment) should be discarded and a new swab collected, since dirt often inhibits PCR analysis. Alternatively, clean the nostril to be collected with a disposable cloth prior to swab collection.
2. Place swab(s) into a plain red top tube and if available add 1-2 drops of sterile saline for qPCR/viral isolation. DO NOT PLACE qPCR OR VIRAL ISOLATION SAMPLES IN BACTERIAL TRANSPORT MEDIA.
3. If sampling more than one horse, fresh gloves should be used for each animal. Where secretions are copious and aerosolization possible, the use of plastic gowns to protect clothing from contamination leading to fomite spread is advisable.
4. The outside of tubes should be wiped down with a disinfectant wipe to prevent contamination of other samples or gloves of handlers.
5. Consider all waste materials and protective equipment to be infectious (gloves, gowns, packaging and swabs).
6. Any restraining equipment such as twitches, nose chains, and lead ropes must be disinfected between use.
7. Keep tubes refrigerated and ship on ice overnight to a diagnostic laboratory of your choice.