Identifying influenza by a Flu Screen Point of Care Test

Whilst a wide variety of viruses are capable of causing lower respiratory tract infections in children and adults, influenza A & B; respiratory syncytial virus (RSV); parainfluenza viruses 1, 2, and 3; and adenovirus are the most common.

Of these, **influenza A & B and RSV** are the most important causes of acute respiratory illness.

Also influenza A & B and RSV share overlapping clinical features and infection potential for certain high-risk patient groups particularly the very young, pregnancy, elderly especially with underlying conditions including cardiopulmonary disease and immuno suppression.

A new strain of Influenza A (H1N1), also known as **swine flu**, was confirmed in the UK in April and has spread to nearly 200 countries around the world.

Although symptoms have generally proved mild, a small number of patients will develop more serious illness. Many of these people have other underlying health conditions, such as heart or lung disease, that put them at increased risk.

Symptoms

- unusual tiredness
- headache
- runny nose
- sore throat
- shortness of breath or cough
- loss of appetite
- aching muscles
- diarrhoea or vomiting

As with any sort of influenza, how bad and how long the symptoms last will depend on treatment and the patient's individual circumstances.
Most cases reported in the UK have been relatively mild, with those affected starting to recover within a week.

However it is equally essential to distinguish viral infections from Bacteriological infections in order to provide appropriate medications.

Cases have arisen where swine flu has been misdiagnosed for upper bacteriological infections and antibiotics have not been given resulting in tragically avoidable deaths.

Flu Screen™ **is a rapid chromatographic one-step-immunoassay for the qualitative detection of Influenza type A and type B antigens in human nasopharyngeal specimens to aid in the diagnosis of Influenza infection.**