

# HEALTH ALERT

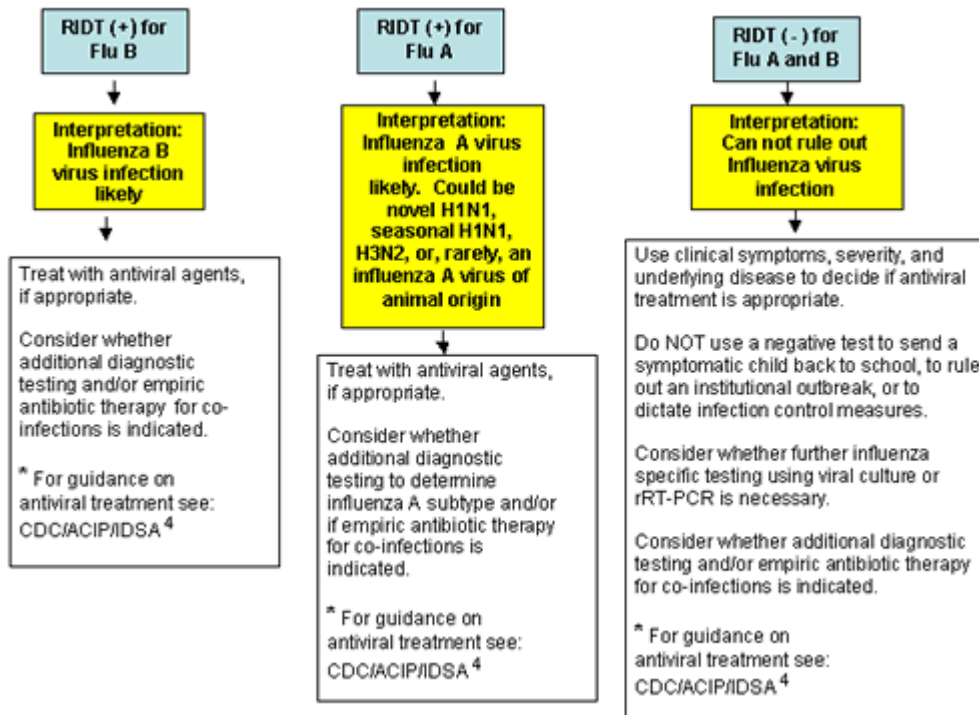
## Rapid Influenza Testing Results May Be Misleading and Pregnancy Risks with Novel Influenza A (H1N1)

Please find below important information just released from the CDC which, because of its importance for your clinical decision making, I and your local health director wanted to quickly share with you.

**Rapid influenza diagnostic tests** (point of care tests) can be extremely convenient; however they can miss a significant number of true infections. Their ability to detect an infection (sensitivity) ranges from 10 to 70%, i.e. such testing can miss from 30 to 90% of true positives. Though a positive result usually means the patient is infected, a negative result is not very useful. The decision to treat a patient suspected of having influenza must rely primarily on the clinical assessment of the patient and that patient's risk factors for complications of influenza. Clinical assessments of influenza have been shown to have greater diagnostic accuracy than the rapid tests, especially during an outbreak.

The following figure from recent CDC guidance summarizes the clinical decision making.

**Figure.** Algorithm to assist in the interpretation of RIDT results during periods when influenza viruses are circulating in the community



The entire report is available at [http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/rapid\\_testing.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/rapid_testing.htm)

# HEALTH ALERT

## Pregnancy and Novel H1N1 Flu Infection

- An article entitled “H1N1 2009 Influenza Virus Infection During Pregnancy in the USA” has been published in the online edition of *The Lancet* on July 29, 2009 at [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(09\)61304-0/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(09)61304-0/fulltext).
- CDC has a number of guidance documents on its website related to pregnancy. These are available at [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu).
- Pregnant women with suspected or confirmed influenza infection need prompt treatment with antiviral medication.
- Pregnant women are at an increased risk for pregnancy complications if infected with an influenza virus.
- Pregnant women who are otherwise healthy have been severely impacted by the novel H1N1 influenza virus.
- Pregnant women who have been infected with novel H1N1 influenza virus have had a higher rate of hospitalization than the general population.
- Of 45 deaths reported to CDC during the first two months of the outbreak, 6 (13%) were in pregnant women.
- Treatment of fever in pregnant women is also important as high fevers may cause problems in a developing fetus, including neural tube defects.
- CDC has posted clinical guidance for treatment and prophylaxis of pregnant women with suspected or confirmed novel H1N1 influenza at the following link: [http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/clinician\\_pregnant.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/clinician_pregnant.htm)