

# INSTRUCTIONS FOR COLLECTION OF SPUTUM SPECIMENS

1. The mouth should be free of any foreign matter. If available, the mouth may be rinsed with filtered or sterile water prior to collection.
2. Sputum should be coughed from deep in the chest and coughed into the plastic collection bottle. To reduce the likelihood of transmission to others, patients are encouraged to collect their sputum specimens outdoors whenever possible.
3. Sputum specimens will be collected in the early morning if possible.
4. A hot drink or breathing deeply over a steam vessel (i.e. pan of boiling water) may help raise sputum.
5. A specimen of 1-2 teaspoons in volume is adequate. The container should not be more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  full. Following collection, the green top will be placed securely on the plastic bottle.
6. Unless instructed otherwise, collect 3 sputum specimens on 3 consecutive days.
7. The specimen bottle must be labeled with the patient's name, date of birth and the date the specimen was collected.
8. The laboratory slip must be completed with the patient's name, date of birth and the date the specimen was collected.
9. The plastic bottle and the lab slip will then be placed in the mailing tube with the screw top securely closed.
10. The specimen will be mailed to the State Public Health Laboratory the same day as it is collected unless otherwise instructed. If specimens are not mailed the same day as collected, they will be refrigerated.
11. A minimum of 3 sputum samples will be collected at least monthly for active TB cases to ensure they convert to smear and culture negative.
12. Patients who have difficulty in raising sputum and need to have sputum specimens induced will be referred to their physician for this procedure.
13. If you have questions about collecting or mailing a specimen, please direct them to:

DIS Office Stamp with Telephone Number