

SPUTUM COLLECTION INSTRUCTIONS



General Information

- Sputum is mucous or phlegm coughed from deep in the lungs. It is not saliva from the mouth or mucous from the back of the throat.
- Sputum specimens should be collected in the early morning if possible.
- Collect 3 sputum specimens on 3 consecutive days unless otherwise instructed.
- Specimens should be kept in the refrigerator until they are submitted to the laboratory.
- To reduce the likelihood of transmission, patients are encouraged to collect sputum specimens outdoors when possible and away from other people.

Procedure:

1. The container is clean. Do not open until ready to use.
2. The mouth should be free of foreign matter and may be rinsed with filtered or sterile water prior to collection.
3. Take deep breaths through your mouth and cough up the mucous from deep in your lungs. Breathing deeply over a pan of boiling water may help raise sputum.
4. Open the container and hold it close to your mouth. Cough the mucous into the container.
5. 1-2 teaspoons of specimen is adequate. The container should not be more than $\frac{1}{2}$ full.
6. Once collected, screw the lid on tightly.
7. Write patient name, date of birth and collection date on specimen bottle.
8. Write patient name, date of birth and collection date on laboratory slip.
9. Specimen should be double bagged in the plastic bags provided.
10. Store specimen in the refrigerator until transported.
11. Notify Department of Health staff to arrange for transport of specimen to the laboratory. Specimens should be transported the same day as collected unless otherwise instructed.



Department of Health Address and Phone Number