

## How to Collect Sputum Samples

Use the three (3) plastic containers given to you to collect sputum samples. The sputum is tested to see if TB germs are growing in your lungs. Sputum (mucous or phlegm) is brought up from the lungs when you cough. Saliva or spit from the mouth and mucous from the nose and throat are not useful for this test.

These instructions will help you collect your samples:

1. Collect one sputum sample when you first get out of bed (early morning) each day because secretions and thick sputum gathers in the lungs overnight. Use a new container for each sample.
2. You should drink plenty of fluids the night before. This will loosen up the secretions in your lungs and make it easier to cough up the sputum. If your doctor has instructed you to limit how much you drink, follow your doctor's directions.
3. DO NOT eat or drink, brush your teeth, smoke, use a mouth wash or rinse your mouth before you collect your sputum (this may contaminate the sample and cause overgrowth of other bacteria).
4. You might consider taking a hot, steamy bath or shower just before collecting sputum because the hot steam may loosen the secretions in your lungs.
5. Wash your hands with soap and warm water. Go to a room by yourself and close the door. Clear your nose and throat.
6. Take several deep breaths then cough deeply in order to bring up sputum from the lungs, not saliva (spit) from the mouth.
7. Spit the sputum into the plastic container, being careful not to touch the inside of the container (so as not to contaminate the sample) or get any of the sputum on the outside of the container. Try to provide at least 5ml (2 teaspoons); the lab requires this amount in order to do the testing.
8. Close the plastic bottle top **tightly** and place the container into the plastic bag provided. Remain in the same room until your coughing stops and wash your hands well.
9. Immediately refrigerate the sample, (to prevent any overgrowth of other bacteria). DO NOT FREEZE the sample.
10. Inform your nurse when you have completed the 3<sup>rd</sup> sputum sample and she/he will pick up the containers or arrange for them to be sent to the laboratory for testing.

**If you have any questions, please contact**

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