



How to Collect Sputum

Why collect sputum?

Sputum collection is an important part of the Tuberculosis (TB) check-up. This test is used to find out if you have TB disease or not. It is important to follow each step.

What is sputum?

Sputum is the mucous that is coughed up from the lungs. It is produced by a deep cough, from the chest. Sputum is not saliva or spit from the mouth.

How to collect sputum?

- **Use a new plastic bottle each sample.** Up to three (3) plastic bottles to collect sputum samples will be given to you.
- Sputum samples can be collected as often as one every hour if able, until all 3 samples are obtained. Many people find it easiest to get a sample right after waking up in the morning. Follow the steps below to collect your sputum.
- Do this for each sample.
 1. **Do not** eat or drink, brush your teeth, smoke or use mouthwash before you collect sputum.
 2. Remove the plastic bottle from the plastic bag. Open the plastic bottle. **Do not** touch the inside of the bottle or the cap.
 3. Breathe in deeply 2-3 times and then cough deeply from the chest to bring up sputum from the lungs (thick sputum collects in the lungs overnight). Try to cough up at least 1 to 2 teaspoons.
 4. Spit the sputum into the plastic bottles. Close the plastic bottle cap tightly.
 5. Put your name, date of birth, and the date and time you collected the sample on both the bottle and the paper (requisition) in the bag. Place bottle and paper in the plastic bag.
 6. Refrigerate the bag with the sputum bottle right away to keep it cold. **Do not** freeze the sputum bottle.
 7. Wash your hands.
- When all the sputum samples are collected call your Public Health Nurse.
- The bags with the sputum bottles will be picked up and sent to the laboratory for testing.

If you have any questions please contact your Public Health Nurse on the business card provided.