

Sputum Culture Acid Fast Culture Cytology

Instructions:

When collecting a **sputum specimen**, you need to know the difference between sputum, saliva and post-nasal drip. Saliva and post-nasal drip specimens are not acceptable.

- **Sputum: The specimen needed for a sputum culture.** Material from deep down in the lungs, which can only be obtained by deep coughing.
- **Saliva:** Watery fluid from the mouth (**not acceptable**)
- **Post-nasal drip:** thick mucus in the back of the nose or throat (**not acceptable**)

1. For collection, you have been given the following:

- Orange sterile screw cap specimen container
- Instruction sheet

2. Collect the sputum in the morning, before eating.

NOTE: Acid Fast requests generally require three specimens collected separately, three days in a row. Follow the instructions for each collection and transport each specimen on ice daily to the lab.

3. **Label** the screw cap container with your **first and last name, date of birth** and **date and time of collection**.

4. Rinse your mouth thoroughly with water.

5. **COUGH DEEPLY** to obtain sputum and cough directly into the container.

The laboratory requires approximately one tablespoon of sputum for the cultures and an additional one tablespoon of sputum for a Cytology specimen.

6. Close the container tightly.

7. Refrigerate the specimen until it is transported to the laboratory.

8. Transport the specimen on ice, in a zip lock plastic bag, as soon as possible to the laboratory.