

## Sputum Specimen Collection

**CLEARLY LABEL SPECIMEN WITH PATIENT'S FULL NAME,  
DATE OF BIRTH, DATE AND TIME OF COLLECTION.  
\*Specimen may be rejected if this crucial step is omitted!\***

1. Please obtain a sterile container from healthcare provider. Any sterile container is acceptable.

Clean dry  
container:



2. The best time of day for you to collect sputum is when you wake up in the morning. However, if you are coughing up sputum all day, you may collect it at any time.
3. Unscrew lid of the clean dry container and place lid on counter. Collect sputum specimen in the container.

*Sputum is usually thick in consistency, opaque, and varies in color from white to yellow to green.*

*Saliva, unlike sputum, is clear and colorless, and examining it will not reveal the cause of a chest infection. Please ensure that you collect sputum and not saliva. **Specimen may be rejected if saliva is submitted for analysis.***

4. Tighten cap securely on container.
5. Clearly label all containers with patient's full name, date of birth, date and time of collection. **Specimen may be rejected if this crucial step is omitted!**
6. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water.
7. Place specimen in specimen bag for transport.
8. Deliver container to healthcare professional as soon as possible. If delay in transport, refrigeration of sample is not necessary unless it is for tuberculosis testing.

\*\* If sputum specimens are ordered times three, please collect one specimen per 24 hour period. More than one day between specimens is acceptable. Under certain circumstances, specimens may be collected 8 hours apart, as long as one of the specimens is a first morning sample.