

How to Collect and Transport a Sputum Sample

You must properly collect and transport sputum sample for the test results to be valid. Please follow these directions.

Sputum is a mucus material produced in respiratory (breathing) diseases. It is produced from a deep cough in your respiratory tract (your mouth, nose, throat and lungs). Saliva is not sputum.

One sample can be used for any of these following tests:

- Culture and sensitivity
- Gram stain
- Fungus culture
- Mycobacteriology (AFB or TB) culture

1. Get a sputum collection cup from your physician.

2. Prepare to get a sample.

The best time to get a sample is in the early morning. Brush your teeth and gargle water before you get a sample. This will reduce the amount of bacteria that could contaminate your sample.

Avoid mouthwashes/gargles with antibacterial ingredients.

3. Collect a sample.

Flip up the white lid. Spit mucus from a deep cough into container. Do not spit saliva into container. Do not scrape your tongue against the rim of the container.

Keep spitting the mucus into the cup until you get enough. You need at least 5 milliliters (mL). There are measurements on the side of the cup.

4. Firmly close the lid. Refrigerate the sample if needed.

If you cannot bring the sample to the lab within 2 hours of spitting mucus into the cup, refrigerate it.

On the side of the cup, write your full name, your date of birth and the time and date that you took the sample.

5. Return your sample to any of our labs for testing.

Visit healthlabtesting.com
or scan the QR code
to see locations and hours.

