

How to Collect a Sputum Sample for Your Lab Test

Collecting a Sputum Sample

Your health care provider has ordered a sputum (also called mucus or phlegm) collection test. The test that is circled on the other side is the one you will need to do.

Before You Collect Your Sample

- You will be given the collection container(s) for your lab test before you are sent home.
- Write the following information on each of your collection containers:
 - your full name
 - date of collection
 - time of collection.
- Rinse or gargle with water.

How to Collect Your Sample

- Collect only one sample per day.
- Collect the sample(s) right away when you wake up from sleeping. Cough as deeply as possible to raise the sputum from your lungs (instead of saliva from your mouth).
- If you have problems collecting your sample, call your health care provider.

Follow the directions below to complete your sputum collection test.

Test	Container	Directions
Sputum Culture, Stain	sterile screw top container	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Collect one sample. ■ For best results, return the sample to the clinic within 2 hours. If this is not possible, keep the sample at room temperature and return it within 24 hours.
AFB Culture, Stain	sterile screw top container	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Collect a total of three samples on separate days. ■ Collect each sample in a different cup. ■ Keep the samples in the refrigerator. ■ Return all of the samples to the clinic at one time.
Fungus Culture	sterile screw top container	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Collect a total of three samples on separate days. ■ Collect each sample in a different cup. ■ Keep the samples in the refrigerator. ■ Return each sample to the clinic within 2 days of collection.
Fungus/Pneumocystis, Stain	sterile screw top container	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Collect one sample. ■ Keep the sample in the refrigerator. ■ Return the sample to the clinic within 24 hours.
Sputum for Cytology	sterile screw top container	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Collect one sample. ■ Keep the sample in the refrigerator. ■ Return the sample to the clinic within 24 hours.