

How to Collect a Sputum Sample for Your Lab Test

General Information

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

Before Collecting Your Sputum 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.

Collecting Your Sputum 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	clean cup with a screw cap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collect one sample. ▪ For best results, return the sample to the clinic within two hours. If this is not possible, keep the sample at room temperature and return it within 24 hours.
AFB Culture, Stain	clean cup with a screw cap	<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	clean cup with a screw cap	<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 two days of collection.
Fungus/Pneumocystis, Stain	clean cup with a screw cap	<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	CytoLyt™ tube	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collect a total of three samples on separate days. ▪ Put all of the samples in one container. ▪ Do not keep the samples in the refrigerator. ▪ Return all of the samples to the clinic at one time on the third day of collecting the samples.