

Collecting Sputum

Your doctor wants you to collect sputum for testing. Sputum is the thick material from deep in the lungs. You must cough deeply to get a sample out. It is not the watery fluid in your mouth or the back of your nose or throat.

How to Collect Sputum

You need to collect 1 sample of sputum each morning before breakfast for 3 mornings in a row. Collect each sample in a separate container.

Steps:

1. Wash your hands.
2. Spit out any fluid in your mouth.
3. Rinse your mouth well with water. Do not use mouthwash of any kind.
4. Cough deeply to get sputum up from the lungs. Spit the sputum directly into the container. Make sure you have at least one tablespoon of sputum.
5. Close the container tightly.
6. Wash your hands.

After You Get the Sample

- Check with your doctor to see if you need to refrigerate the samples until you can get them to the laboratory.
- Write your name and the date of the sample on each container.
- Return all 3 containers to:

Call your doctor's office if you cannot cough up sputum from your lungs.

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