



Patient Instructions for Sputum Collection

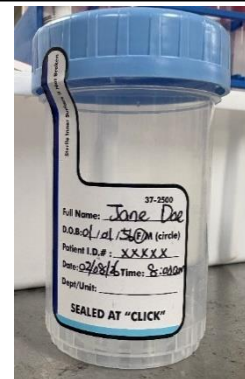
Before you begin...

- Read **all** the instructions carefully.
- If your healthcare provider has instructed you to stay away from others, collect your sample outside or in front of an open window if possible.
- Do **not** open the sterile collection cup until you are ready to cough.
- Gargle and rinse your mouth with plain water or brush your teeth (you may use toothpaste) just prior to collecting. Do **not** use mouthwash. Remove dentures.
- Follow your provider's instructions to clear your airways before sputum is collected.

Sputum is the mucous or phlegm that you cough up from your lungs. It is thick and sticky. Sputum is **not saliva (spit). Saliva comes from the mouth or back of the throat and is thin and watery.**

1. Write clearly on the cup with a **permanent** marker:

- Your Full Name (First and Last)
- Your Date of Birth (month/day/year)
- Date and Time of Collection



****IMPORTANT: Specimens with missing or incorrect labels will not be tested.**

2. Take a very deep breath and hold it for 5 seconds. Breathe out slowly. Take another deep breath and cough hard, deeply from within your chest until some sputum comes up into your mouth.
3. Spit the sputum directly into the sterile plastic cup, fill the cup to 5 to 10mL (about 1 teaspoon).
4. Screw the cap on tightly until it clicks or is fully threaded to prevent leaks.



5. Place the **labeled specimen container** into a sealed plastic bag. Keep it in the refrigerator.
6. Wash your hands with soap and water and dry thoroughly.
7. Collect 1 sample each morning for 3 mornings in a row. If that is not possible, collect them at least 8 hours apart.
8. Keep each labeled sample in a **separate** plastic bag in the refrigerator until you have all 3.



9. **Drop-off:** On the day you collect your third sample, return all 3 refrigerated samples at the same time to the location as directed by your provider.