



St. Michael's

DEPARTMENT OF LABORATORY MEDICINE  
DIVISION OF MICROBIOLOGY

Document Name: Collection Instructions of  
Sputum for TB

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## COLLECTION OF SPUTUM SPECIMEN FOR TB

### MATERIALS SUPPLIED

Labelled sterile container x 3  
Biohazard transport bag x 3  
Requisition completed by physician or clinic

### GENERAL INFORMATION

Sputum is material brought up from the lungs. Saliva and mucus from the nose and throat are not useful for laboratory tests.

The best time to collect a sputum sample is in the early morning because secretions have accumulated overnight.

Drink plenty of fluids the night before to increase the production of sputum. If your doctor has asked you to restrict your fluid intake, follow his or her directions.

It is recommended that you take a hot, steamy bath or shower before collecting sputum. The hot steam will loosen up the secretions in your lungs.

### COLLECTION PROCEDURE

**Note: Patients should have three spontaneous sputa taken at least 8 hours apart. One of these specimens must be an early morning specimen.**

1. Wash and dry hands thoroughly.
2. Remove dentures if present.
3. Early morning sputum is preferred. Do not brush your teeth or rinse your mouth before collection.
4. Open the lid of the specimen container.
5. Take several deep breaths and exhale.
6. Cough deeply and expectorate the sputum (~one teaspoonful in volume) into a sterile container.
7. Be careful not to contaminate the inside of the container with hands and not to contaminate the outside of container with sputum.
8. Close and tighten the lid of container.
9. Wash hands thoroughly after collection.
10. Write the patient's full name, the date and time that the specimen was collected on the container.
11. Place specimen in the biohazard transport bag.
12. Place the completed requisition in the side pouch of the biohazard transport bag.
13. Store container in the fridge. Do not freeze.

Once you have collected all three samples, deliver them to Microbiology laboratory.  
The Microbiology laboratory will receive specimens 24 hours/7 days a week.

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**Microbiology Laboratory: St. Michael's Hospital, Cardinal Carter wing, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor – Room 2-044**  
**Telephone #: 416-864-5381**

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