



St. Michael's

DEPARTMENT OF LABORATORY MEDICINE
DIVISION OF MICROBIOLOGY

Document Name: Collection Instructions of Sputum
for Culture

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COLLECTION INSTRUCTIONS OF SPUTUM FOR CULTURE

Materials supplied:

Labeled 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, however samples taken at other times of the day are acceptable.

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/ 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:

1. Wash and dry hands thoroughly.
2. Remove dentures if present.
3. Rinse mouth with water (if specimen is for culture only).
NOTE: If collecting specimen for both culture and TB, DO NOT brush teeth or rinse mouth before collection.
4. Open the lid of the sample 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 inside the biohazard transport bag. Put the completed requisition in the side pouch of the bag.
12. Store specimen in the fridge. Do not freeze.

Deliver the specimen to Microbiology Laboratory within 24 hours of collection.

The microbiology laboratory will receive specimens 24 hours/7 days a week.

Microbiology Laboratory: St. Michael's Hospital, Cardinal Carter wing, 2nd floor – Room 2044
Telephone #: 416-864-5381

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