

# How to Collect Sputum

Sputum collection is an important part of the tuberculosis (TB) check-up. This test is used to find out if you have TB disease or not. Sputum comes from the lungs. It is produced by a deep cough from the chest. Sputum is not saliva or spit from the mouth.

You will be given three plastic bottles, three lab bags and lab forms for collecting sputum samples.

Follow the steps below to collect your sputum. Do this **every morning for 3 days**. Use a **different plastic bottle each day**; start with bottle #1 and end with bottle #3.

- 1) Upon waking, **do not** eat or drink, brush your teeth, smoke or use mouthwash. You may want to take a hot shower before collecting sputum; it will make it easier for you to cough up sputum.
- 2) Remove the plastic bottle from the plastic bag. **Do not** remove the lab form from the bag. Open the plastic bottle. **Do not** touch the inside of the bottle or the cap.
- 3) Breathe in deeply 2-3 times and then cough deeply from the chest to bring up sputum from the lungs. (Thick sputum collects in the lungs overnight.) Try to cough up at least 1 to 2 teaspoons.
- 4) Spit the sputum into the plastic bottle. Close the plastic bottle cap **tightly**.
- 5) Place the bottle into the plastic bag and close it using the Ziploc feature.
- 6) **Refrigerate the bag** with the sputum bottle **right away** to keep it cold. **Do not freeze** the sputum bottle.
- 7) Wash your hands.

**When the sputum samples are collected, your nurse will pick up the bags with the sputum bottles and take them to the lab for testing.**

**Collection date/time:** \_\_\_\_\_



**If you have questions about TB or collecting sputum, please contact your doctor or speak with a Public Health Nurse by calling 905-546-2063**

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