

Sputum Collection

Why is a Sputum Test Done?

A sputum test helps diagnose respiratory infections and other lung conditions. Sputum is the mucus or phlegm you cough up from deep within your lungs, not saliva from your mouth. Collecting a clean, uncontaminated sample ensures accurate test results and helps your healthcare provider determine the best course of treatment.

Important Guidelines for Collection

- **Label Your Sample:** Write your **name, date of birth, and time of collection** on the container.
- **Use a Sterile Container:** Only use the sterile container provided by the lab to avoid contamination.
- **Refrigerate If Needed:** If you're unable to bring your sample to the lab within two hours, refrigerate it until you can deliver it.

Sputum Collection Instructions

1. **Best Time to Collect:** The ideal time to collect a sputum sample is first thing in the morning, as mucus tends to build up overnight.
2. **Rinse Your Mouth:** Rinse your mouth with water before starting to reduce contamination from saliva or food particles.
3. **Take Deep Breaths:** Take a few deep breaths to help loosen the mucus in your lungs.
4. **Cough Deeply:** Breathe in deeply, then cough hard from deep within your lungs to bring up sputum (not just saliva).
5. **Collect the Sample:**
 - Hold the container close to your mouth as you cough to capture the sputum directly into it.
 - Avoid touching the inside of the container or lid to keep the sample sterile.
6. **Secure the Lid:** Make sure the lid is tightly sealed to prevent leaks and clearly label the container.

Delivering the Sample

- **Bring to the Lab Promptly:** Aim to bring the sample to the lab within two hours. If this isn't possible, refrigerate the sample and bring it as soon as you can.
- **Avoid Delays:** Prompt delivery helps maintain the sample's quality for accurate testing.

People you know. Healthcare you trust.



If you have any questions or need additional instructions, contact your healthcare provider or lab. Following these steps carefully helps ensure reliable test results.

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