



How to Collect a Sputum Sample

You have been given a package with **three special plastic cups** and **three bags with a requisition** in each bag for collecting your sputum.

Please follow these steps carefully:

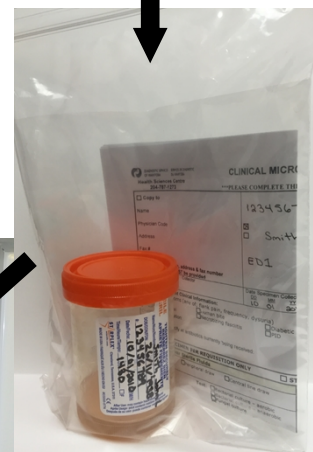
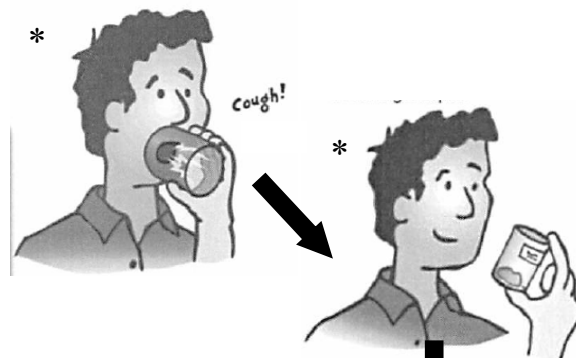
1. The cup is very clean. Don't open it until you are ready to use it.
2. The best time to get sputum is **first thing in the morning**, right after you wake up. Don't eat or drink anything first. You don't need to brush your teeth.
3. If possible, go outside or into a separate room, close the door and **open a window** before collecting the sputum sample. This helps protect other people from germs when you cough.
4. Open the cup and hold it close to your mouth.
5. Take a very **deep breath** and hold the air for 5 seconds. Slowly breathe out. Do this again. Now, take another deep breath and **cough hard** until some sputum comes up into your mouth from deep in your chest.
6. **Spit the sputum** into the plastic cup. Keep breathing and coughing until you have a **tablespoon** of sputum.
7. **Screw the cap** on the cup **tightly** so it does not leak. If the outside of the cup is dirty, rinse it off and dry it.
8. Write the **date** you collected the sputum on the cup. Put the cup into the **bag with the requisition** the health care provider gave you. **Wash your hands** with soap and water.
9. Put the bag with the cup of sputum in the fridge. Return all three specimens to _____ as directed.
10. If you **can't produce sputum**, please let us know. We will help get your sputum another way.



1

2

3



You need to provide specimens on the following days:

Cup #1:	Cup #2:	Cup #3:
Date: _____	Date: _____	Date: _____
Place the bag in the fridge	Place the bag in the fridge	Return all three specimens to _____ as directed.





Questions and Answers on Sputum Collection

Q. What is “sputum”?

A. Sputum is the phlegm or mucus that comes from deep inside your lungs. It is NOT the same as saliva (spit) that comes from your mouth. Sputum is usually thick and sticky. Saliva is watery and thin.

We do not want to collect saliva. We only want to collect sputum.

Q. Why is a sputum test needed?

A. Testing your sputum is the best way to find out if you have TB disease in your lungs. We need to test your sputum at two or three different times to see if you have TB.

Q. What if I had a negative skin test or a normal chest x-ray? Do I still need to give sputum?

A. Yes, during a TB investigation or follow-up, your care provider may ask you for sputum samples. Anyone who has TB symptoms should give us a sputum sample to make sure there is no TB disease in their lungs. Sputum samples are needed even if the other tests were normal.

Q. When is the best time to try to make sputum?

A. The best time to make sputum is in the morning. That is when it is easiest to get sputum from your lungs and it will also be very thick, making it a good sample to test.

Q. Do I need to try to make sputum on three different days?

A. You may be asked to try to make sputum on three different days – this is OK. You may also be asked to try to make sputum all on the same day, by trying to cough up sputum at three different times on the same day. If you are asked to make three sputum samples on the same day, the times that you should try to collect sputum will be noted in your instructions.

Q. What if I can't make any sputum?

A. Some people make a lot of sputum, but other people don't make any. If you can't give us sputum from inside your lungs, that is OK. Just let us know and we will help get your sputum another way.

Q. How will I find out my results?

A. Your healthcare provider will let you know if your test results are positive as soon as they are ready. Sometimes it can take up to 7 weeks before all of the results are available.

Q. Who can I contact for more information on getting tested for TB?

A. You can call your care provider at _____ or Health Links – Info Santé at **1-888-315-9257**.

*, Graphics adapted from Yukon Communicable Disease Control

