

What is Sputum?

- Sputum is the mucous or phlegm coughed up *from your lungs*. It is not saliva or mucous from the back of the throat.
- Sputum specimens are best if coughed up first thing in the morning, after you have been sleeping at night.
- Do not eat, drink, smoke or brush your teeth before collecting the sputum sample.
- About a tablespoon of sputum is the amount that is needed.
- Screw the lid on tightly so it does not leak. Label the outside of the container with your name, date of birth and date/time of collection. Specimens should be kept at room temperature in the sterile container provided.
- To protect others from germs go away from other people when collecting your sample. Do not open the container until you are ready to use it

Instructions:

1. Remove dentures if you have them.
2. Before collecting sample, gargle with clean water to rinse out your mouth (do not use mouthwash).
3. Take deep breaths through your mouth. Try and cough up mucous from deep in your chest. You may need to take several deep breaths and do lots of coughing.
4. Open the sterile container provided and hold it close to your mouth. Cough the mucous into the jar. Wipe off the outside of the container to remove any excess sputum that may have contacted the outside of the container.
5. Screw the lid on tightly so it does not leak. Label the outside of the container with your first and last name, date of birth and date/time collected.
6. Put the used container into the bag it came in and seal the bag closed.
7. Return specimen to the hospital laboratory or doctor's office as soon as possible.

**If you have any questions please contact
Community Hospital's laboratory at (970) 644-3260.**