



## Patient Instructions for Sputum Collection

1. Collect the specimen in the morning after you first wake.
  - a. A sample may be collected at any time for patients who have a deep cough that is readily productive.
2. Gargle and rinse your mouth with plain water just prior to collecting.
3. Take a very deep breath and hold for 5 seconds. Slowly breathe out. Take another deep breath and cough hard, deeply from within the chest until some sputum comes up into your mouth.
4. Spit the sputum into the plastic cup provided by your provider or laboratory.
  - a. Do not spit saliva into the container - saliva and upper respiratory secretions are not sputum and are not acceptable specimens, which may lead to rejection of the sample.
  - b. One to three milliliters (approximately 1 teaspoon) of sputum is sufficient.
5. Screw the cap back on the container, making sure it is threaded properly to prevent leakage.
6. Label the specimen cup with your full first and last name, birth date, and date/time of collection.
  - a. \*Incorrectly or incompletely labeled specimens will not be tested.
7. Place the labeled specimen container into the plastic zip-lock bag. Return the specimen to the nearest Aspirus laboratory as soon as possible.
  - a. The specimen may be refrigerated for not more than three hours before returning to the laboratory.
  - b. Prolonged delays will affect test results and may result in your sample needing to be recollected.
8. Report to the registration desk upon arrival with the specimen. Reception will register you and assist in directing the sample to the lab.

*\*If you have any questions regarding these instructions, you may call your local laboratory for clarification.*