



Sputum for Culture

About your Test

- Your health professional has requested tests to check for the presence of infection.
- This test requires you to collect a sample of your sputum (lung secretions).
- To ensure optimal test results it is important to collect sputum and NOT saliva, or nasal secretions from the back of your throat.
- You will need to obtain a specimen container and a delivery bag from your health professional or from Southern Community Laboratories.

The Procedure

1. Before you collect your sample (preferably when you first get up in the morning), rinse your mouth and gargle with tap water 3 or 4 times. Do not use toothpaste to clean your teeth before collecting the sample. For patients with dentures, remove dentures first.
2. Avoid collecting saliva if possible. Perform a 'deep cough' to produce sputum (take several deep breaths before each cough can help),
3. Collect the sputum sample directly into the specimen container and screw the lid down firmly.
4. Write your full name, date of birth, and date and time of collection on the container label and put the container in the delivery bag with the request form in the front pocket.
5. Store your samples in a cool place (not your fridge), and deliver to the laboratory as soon as possible.

Reminder: Have you labelled the container?

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**If you require further information regarding your test procedure please
telephone Southern Community Laboratories on 0800 101 444**