

Sputum Collection for Cytology

About your Test

- Your health professional has requested tests which require you to collect a sample of your sputum each day for 1, 2 or 3 days. Your health professional will clarify the number of days required.
- 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 delivery bag from your health professional or from Southern Community Laboratories. If you are required to collect 2 or 3 samples, you will be provided with 2 or 3 containers. Each sample must be delivered to your health professional or Southern Community Laboratories on the day collected.

Test 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 sample in a cool place (not your fridge), and deliver as soon as possible to the laboratory or your nearest collection centre.

Reminder: Have you labelled the container?