

A sputum culture is used to find bacteria that can cause infections in the lungs. Doctors order one to three sputum cultures depending on what they are looking for.

Patient Instructions

1. If possible, you should use water to gently brush the teeth and the inside of the mouth including the tongue. Rinse the mouth and gargle with water. Do not use toothpaste or mouthwash.
2. A sticky label is usually provided in the bottom of the collection container. It must be taken out before starting the collection.
 - i. Take off the bottom lid.
 - ii. Leave the screw cap where it is.
 - iii. Take out only the label.
 - iv. Put the bottom lid back on.
3. The first morning specimen is the best one.
4. Hold the container upright and lift the tab on the top of the container.
5. Check to make sure the tube inside is not loose in the container. If it is, screw the tube into the container, from the bottom.
6. Cough deeply and expectorate sputum into the collection container.

Bring to the hospital laboratory immediately (within one hour of collection).

