

## How to collect a sputum sample

Sputum is the mucous (or phlegm) you cough up from your lungs. It is not saliva (spit) from your mouth or mucous from the back of your throat.

The best time to collect a sputum sample is best first thing in the morning, after you wake up from a night's sleep.

### Important

- **Before you collect the sample**, read all of these instructions.
- Collect the sample **before** you brush your teeth, gargle with any mouth antiseptics, smoke, or eat anything.

**Follow each step to make sure you collect your sample correctly.**

### What you need

- Sample container we give you  
(Do not open it until you are ready to use it)



### To collect a sample

1. Write your full name and date of birth on the sample container.
2. Wash your hands with soap and water.
3. Rinse your mouth with water.
4. Take 2 to 3 deep breaths.
5. Try and cough up mucous from deep in your chest.
6. When you have coughed up some mucous,
  - a. Open the sample container.
  - b. Carefully spit the mucous into the container. Be careful not to get any on the outside of the collection container
7. Screw the lid on.
8. **Repeat Steps 4 to 7** every 10 to 15 minutes over the next hour.
9. Make sure the lid is screwed on tightly.
10. Write time you started collecting samples on the sample container.
11. Return the sample to the laboratory as soon as possible.

August 2022

FH Catalogue #264398

VCH Catalogue # FA.140.H169

Lower Mainland Pathology & Laboratory Medicine