

PATIENT INSTRUCTIONS

COLLECTION OF SPUTUM SAMPLES FOR CULTURE

The following collection instructions are intended to help you collect the correct specimen for the test your clinician has requested.

First read the instructions carefully, make sure you are prepared, and then follow each of the steps to ensure proper collection.

- Early morning sputum samples are preferable, but samples collected at other times of the day are also acceptable. Sputum is material brought up from as far down in the lungs as possible after a deep cough. It is not saliva.
- Use an approved sterile container for collection.
- Complete the information requested on the container label. Make sure you include:
 - your full name
 - date of birth
 - the date and time you collected the specimen. If you have a requisition, note the date and time on the requisition.
- Wash and dry your hands thoroughly.
- If you wear dentures, remove them.
- Rinse your mouth well with water.
- Remove the container cap.
- After a big cough, place the sputum into the provided empty sterile container.
- Replace the cap and tighten firmly.
- Remember to wash your hands well after collecting the specimen.
- Keep the sputum sample **refrigerated** and submit to the laboratory within 24 hours of collection.