

COLLECTION OF SPUTUM SAMPLES FOR CULTURE

Collection of Specimens for Microbiology

Proper transport and storage of specimens are prerequisites for reliable culture results. Ensure that the requisition and specimen are labeled with:

- patient's full name
- date of birth or health card number
- **source of specimen**
- date of collection
- time of collection

The examination requested should be specified on the requisition.

Information concerning anti-microbial therapy or allergy, pregnancy, clinical diagnosis, or underlying disease should also be noted.

Specimens should be transported promptly to LifeLabs Laboratory. Delays to processing, beyond the recommended acceptable holding times, will compromise culture results.

All specimens and body fluids are considered potentially hazardous. They should be treated as if capable of causing disease. Clinical information or patient history as provided by the physician determines the scope of the laboratory investigation by ensuring that all laboratory services are relevant or adequate for each clinical situation.

Microbiology Collection Container:



Sterile Container (90 mL)

COLLECTION OF SPUTUM SAMPLES FOR CULTURE

Early morning sputum samples are preferable for routine C&S, 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. It is not saliva.

Collect the sample into a 90 mL sterile container.

Ensure that the specimen and requisition are labeled with the patient's full name, date of birth or health card number, source of specimen and date and time of collection.

*** Physicians requiring investigation of respiratory specimens from cystic fibrosis patients are advised to send patients to CF facilities for specimen collection and processing.

Collection of Sputum Samples for Culture

- Wash and dry your hands.
- If you wear dentures, remove them.
- Rinse your mouth with water.
- Remove the container cap.
- After a big cough, place the sputum into the empty 90 mL sterile container.
- Carefully and tightly replace the cap.
- Wash your hands after collecting the specimen.

Store refrigerated at 2-8°C and submit to the laboratory WITHIN 24 hours of collection.

Special requests for TB, fungus/mycology or other requests should be noted on the requisition. Samples collected early in the morning are optimal.

A separate sputum specimen is optimal for each request (i.e., one sample for routine bacteriology, one for TB and one for mycology, if all 3 requests are indicated).

For TB Culture

- Do not rinse mouth with water as saprophytic mycobacteria in tap water may produce false positive results.
- Collect an early morning specimen from a deep, productive cough on three consecutive days. Do not pool specimens.
- Store refrigerated at 2-8°C and submit to the PHL laboratory WITHIN 24 hours of collection with a completed PHL requisition.

For Fungal Culture

- Collect an early morning specimen.
- Store refrigerated at 2-8°C and submit to the PHL laboratory WITHIN 24 hours of collection with a completed PHL requisition.