

Graham Health System Laboratory  
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## Sputum Collection for TB

1. The first morning specimens are preferred and generally yields the most accurate results.
2. If you wear dentures, remove them. Rinse mouth and gargle with water.
3. Open the sterile container bag.
4. Remove the collection system from the bag and fill out the patient label. Lift the hinged lid, **DO NOT** touch the inside of the funnel
5. Cough deeply and then spit the sputum (thick mucous material) into the collection container. The specimen needs to be mucous, **NOT SALIVA**. For TB cultures, there needs to be about 5 ml (just past the cone part) of the specimen container. This may take several coughs to collect. Close the container lid between cough collections.
6. After collection is complete, remove the patient label and set it aside. Remove snap cap to expose sputum tube threaded cap. Remove funnel top and invert over tube.
7. Squeeze middle part of sputum collection container and screw tube into threaded cap. Discard funnel top. Place patient label on side of tube. And place the tube back in its base and deliver to lab.
8. Deliver the specimen to the laboratory within one hour.
9. If unable to return specimen to laboratory within in one hour, the specimen may be refrigerated for up to four hours.