

Collecting a Sputum Specimen

When collecting a sputum specimen, it is important to understand the difference between “sputum” and saliva. Sputum is the product of a cough from deep within the chest. Saliva originates in the mouth. In most cases, a test will be done to determine if the specimen is sputum or saliva. Saliva will be rejected and you will need to provide a new specimen. The best time to collect sputum is immediately after awakening. **Note: If you wear dentures, remove them before collection.**

SPECIMEN COLLECTION

1. Rinse your mouth with water. Discard the rinse water.
2. Do not remove the outer plastic label from the container. Unscrew the white cap. Cough up material from the lungs, bronchi and trachea and spit it into the funnel.
3. After the specimen is collected, replace the white cap and screw it tightly onto the container. To prevent leakage, make sure cap is threaded properly. Leaking specimens will be rejected.
4. Label the container with your name, date of birth, and the date and time of specimen collection.

5. Immediately after collection, place the specimen container in a plastic bag and refrigerate. Transport to a patient service center inside a second plastic bag containing ice. *Note: specimen cannot be left out at room temperate.*

DELIVER SPECIMEN TO ANY PATIENT SERVICE CENTER

Sputum specimens must be received by the laboratory in less than 24 hours from the time of collection. Please deliver your specimen to a Patient Service Center as soon as possible. For a list of Patient Service Center locations, go to www.peacehealthlabs.org/locations

ABOUT YOUR TEST RESULTS

If you have questions about your results, please contact your doctor. Laboratory tests are only one part of your total medical profile, so your doctor is your best source of information about all aspects of your health.

ABOUT BILLING

Your doctor will likely choose to have PeaceHealth Laboratories bill you or your insurance carrier directly. We bill most insurance carriers. If you have questions about your bill, please call us at 541-341-8021 or 800-826-3616.