



Sputum collection for cytology and TB

Please follow these instructions carefully to ensure your results are accurate and reliable.

Sputum collection for cytology and TB is usually requested as “x3”. This means that your doctor would like you to collect 1 sputum sample each day, for 3 days in a row.

1. Obtain the 3 jars you require from your nearest Melbourne Pathology collection centre or doctor and label them with your full name, date of birth and date and time of collection.
2. Sputum should be produced from a deep cough from the base of the lungs. Sputum is usually of a thick consistency and white, yellow or green in colour. A sample of sputum may be easier to produce first thing in the morning. Saliva, in contrast, is often clear and colourless. Saliva is of no use in this investigation.
3. Spit sputum directly into the jar.
4. Deliver each sample to your nearest Melbourne Pathology collection centre on the day you collect it to ensure the specimen is suitable for testing. Keep it at room temperature until delivered.
5. Please do not arrange to collect specimens on Saturdays, Sundays or public holidays.