

PATIENT INSTRUCTIONS How to Collect: SPUTUM SPECIMENS

Sputum is a thick secretion that can be coughed up from the chest. Saliva (spit) or nose and throat secretions (phlegm) are not sputum and cannot be tested. The ideal sputum specimen should be collected first thing in the morning. You must collect the specimen as described below in order to get a good sample.

- 1) Gargle and rinse the mouth and throat 2 or 3 times with tap water to rid the mouth of saliva and mucous (phlegm).
- 2) In order to loosen secretions clap your cupped hand a number of times over the central region of your upper chest. Or get someone to clap your upper back with a cupped hand.
- 3) Take a deep breath and cough as hard as you can without hurting yourself. You are to produce a glob or chunk of thick sputum, which may be coloured. The sputum should be collected into the sterile container.
- 4) If you don't cough up thick sputum, repeat steps 2 and 3. Or wait a while and try again so that you get a proper specimen. (Note: Saliva (spit) is not suitable for testing.)
- 5) PRINT your name and date of birth on the label of the container. Be sure the cap is screwed on tightly.
- 6) Take the specimen to the laboratory as soon as possible.

If you have any questions, please contact your local CML HealthCare Specimen Collection Centre at: