

Collecting a Sputum (Phlegm) Sample

- Infection control procedures apply
- Wear suitable protective equipment, especially gloves
- Ensure the person's privacy and dignity
- Often, sputum (phlegm) is collected in the morning although not always
- Sit the person up, make them comfortable
- Firstly, wash their mouth out with water (not mouthwash) to prevent any contamination of the sputum
- Spit the water out into a bowl and wipe their face so it is clean
- The client expectorates - coughs up and spits out sputum (phlegm) - into an appropriate sterile sample pot
- Have paper tissues available for them to wipe their face after expectorating
- Make sure the client is comfortable
- Immediately, seal the specimen pot lid and label the specimen container appropriately
- Put the specimen container into a specimen bag for transit to the relevant place for testing
- If it has to be stored in a refrigerator, only use a refrigerator specifically for storing samples in

