

Sputum Collections

Instructions for Patients

Important Notes:

- It is important that a quality, deep cough specimen is collected to provide accurate results. Specimens should not be saliva only.
- It is suggested to collect an early morning specimen
- Specimens must be collected into a dry sterile container provided by the lab or your physician. Alternative containers may not be used.
- Collect BEFORE starting antibiotic treatment

Directions for Collection:

1. First, rinse mouth with tap water to remove food particles and debris
2. Breathe deeply and cough several times. This should be a deep cough designed to expel mucus material.
3. Expectorate (spit) the mucus specimen into the sterile container provided
4. Label the container with name, date of birth, date and time of the collection.
5. Transport the specimen to the laboratory within 2 hours of collection and within normal business hours of the location selected. *
6. Keep the specimen at room temperature. DO NOT refrigerate.

*For locations and hours of operation go to www.stelizabeth.com/care/find-a-location/

Additional Information for In-Office Collections/ Collections with Provider

- To assure a quality specimen at the time of collection, when possible, collect under direct supervision of a nurse or physician. Follow the same steps listed above for patient collection.
- For AFB cultures, three sputum specimens at 8-24hr intervals (24hrs when possible) and at least one first morning specimen are recommended. An individual order must be submitted for each specimen collected.