


Document Title:	Sputum Cytology	
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Sputum is the thick mucus that is expelled from the lower airways (bronchi and lungs) through coughing. It is usually thick in consistency, opaque and varies in colour from white to yellow to green. Saliva, unlike sputum, is clear and colourless. It is very important to collect sputum and not saliva.

Equipment

- 3x Sterile Yellow-top Containers

Patient Instructions

- Collect 3 deeply coughed sputum specimens: **on 3 separate days**. Preferably collected on consecutive days.
- Collect specimen before any food or drink to avoid contamination.
- Take a deep breath in and cough deeply and put the sputum sample into the yellow top container. Do not spit saliva into the container. This is not an acceptable specimen.
- Tighten the lid firmly onto the container to avoid the sample spilling out.
- Write your surname, first given name, date of birth and the date/time of collection on the container label.
- Each sputum specimen must be delivered as soon as possible on the day of collection.
- When the specimen is dropped off at Northern Pathology Victoria, the collector will confirm the patients' surname, first name, date of birth, address and phone number and time and date of collection.