

Document Title:	Sputum for AFB	
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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:**

1. An early morning sputum sample is required to be collected on three consecutive days.
2. Collect specimen before consuming food or drink to avoid possible contamination.
3. Collect the sample directly into the sterile containers provided.
4. Cough vigorously until you feel sputum collect in the back of your throat, and then spit this into the plastic container provided
5. Check that sputum is present in your container — it should be thick, opaque, and coloured. If only saliva (a watery, clear, and colourless liquid) is present, the sample is not suitable. Obtain another collection jar from your doctor or a Collection Centre and try again.
6. Securely replace the lid to avoid sample spilling out.
7. Write your surname, first name, date of birth and, date and time of collection on the container.
8. Specimens must be returned to the collection centre on the day of collection.

When the specimen is dropped off at the collection centre, the collector will confirm your surname, first name, date of birth, address and phone number and time and date of collection.

If you have any questions with this test please contact Northern Pathology Victoria on (03)8405-8181.