



Patient Information - Microbiology

Your doctor has requested a sputum test and the laboratory requires a specimen of inflammatory secretions (phlegm) which has been coughed up from the lungs and lower air passages.

This sputum is usually thick and opaque and may vary in colour (grey, green or yellow). Thin watery saliva is not suitable for testing.

Please collect this sample first thing in the morning and deliver to the lab as soon as possible that day.

Please use the following instructions to make your collection:

1. Rinse your mouth with water first, this can help with the collection and exclude saliva.
2. Take a deep breath in followed by a strong cough. This will help carry the sputum into your throat.
3. Cough the specimen into the container provided.
4. A correct sputum sample is one that you feel has come up from your chest or lungs.
5. If the sample appears thin and watery with food particles, then it is saliva. Please obtain another sterile container and collect again.
6. Label the specimen container with your name and the date you produced the specimen.
7. Take the sample to the laboratory on the same day as collection.

Helpful tips and tricks:

If at home, try arranging pillows over the side of a bed and lie on them head downwards for about ten minutes to drain the sputum from the lungs.

For a full list of our **Christchurch collection centres** and their opening hours please visit: **www.chl.co.nz** or contact 0800 THE LAB (843522)

Ashburton: CHLabs, Ashburton Hospital, Elizabeth Street. **Phone: 03 307 8456 or email: ashlab@cdhb.health.nz**