



Patient Information - Microbiology

Your doctor has requested a TB sputum test and the laboratory requires 3 separate specimens 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 use the following instructions to make your collection:

1. Take a deep breath in followed by a strong cough. This will help carry the sputum into your throat.
2. Cough the specimen into the container provided.
3. A correct sputum sample is one that you feel has come up from your chest or lungs.
4. If the sample appears thin and watery with food particles, then it is saliva. Please obtain another sterile container and collect again.
5. Label the specimen container with your name, date of birth. Please also add the date you produced the specimen to the container and the request form.
6. **You will need to repeat this process every day for three days. The specimens may be refrigerated and delivered to the laboratory once all three have been collected.**

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 the **Christchurch collection centres** and their opening hours please visit: www.chl.co.nz or contact 0800 THE LAB (843522)

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