



## Sputum

### Collection Procedure

Instruct the patient as follows:

1. Rinse the mouth with tap water to remove food particles and debris.
2. Have the patient breathe deeply and cough several times to receive a deep specimen.
3. The patient should expectorate into a dry, sterile container.

If the patient is unable to produce sputum, induce using saline nebulization. Consult respiratory therapy for assistance.

For AFB cultures, three sputum specimens at 8-24 hour intervals (24 hours when possible) and at least one first-morning specimen are recommended. (An individual order must be submitted for each specimen.)