

Sputum Collection

All sputum collected for Acid Fast Bacilli (AFB) and TB culture will be submitted to the OSDH Public Health Laboratory, located at the OSDH, for evaluation. Make sure the facility maintains a supply of specimen containers and mailers. These are available from the OSDH Public Health Laboratory.

When

The best time, but not the only time, to collect a sputum specimen is upon awakening in the morning. When more than one specimen is required they will be collected on different days. Any specimens collected in one day will count as one specimen.

Where

The safest place to collect sputum is in an AIIR. If one is not available an equally safe place is outside in the open air in the shade. Take precautions to keep the specimen out of sunlight at all times because ultraviolet light kills the TB bacteria and exposure to sunlight could alter the test result. After specimen collection the container should be shielded from sunlight during transport into the facility.

How

Specimen collection should be done without the offender rinsing the mouth or brushing teeth. The offender should be instructed to sit or stand and open the specimen container. The offender will take several deep breaths in a row and after the last deep breath the offender should cough as hard as possible into the container. The specimen should not contain saliva or nasal secretions. If a offender is nebulized for specimen collection the container and laboratory slip should clearly indicate it is a nebulized specimen. Because nebulized specimens are more watery than natural specimens the lab may discard a watery specimen if not correctly labeled as "nebulized."