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Centre intégré
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du Bas-Saint-Laurent

Québec 

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User Instructions

Sputum Culture

Clinical Department of Laboratory Medicine

OPTI-DE-010



Your doctor has prescribed a **sputum** collection test for which you must collect your sputum at home.

Sputum culture is used to detect pathogenic bacteria and sometimes fungi in the lower respiratory tract (bronchi and lungs).

This brochure explains the steps to follow.

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- **Sterile** sampling container (white or orange cap)



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INSTRUCTIONS

- You do not need to be fasting to collect the sample, but it is best to collect it when you get up or when your airways are a little more congested. Do not eat before taking the sample.
- You can rinse your mouth out with water beforehand. (Do not brush teeth or use mouthwash)
- The sample **must not** contain saliva; the sputum must come from the deep respiratory tract.
- Only one sample should be taken per container per day.

SPECIMEN IDENTIFICATION

If not already marked on the container, **clearly** write the following information on the label:

- Your last and first name
- Your personal reference number (medical file number or health insurance number)
- The date and time of sampling

STORAGE

- Store your samples in a plastic zip-lock bag.
- Keep your samples **refrigerated (4 °C). Do not freeze.**

RETURN OF SAMPLES

- Return your specimens to the place you were instructed to return them, i.e., the specimen collection centre at the hospital, the local point of service (LPS) or another location.
- When returning the samples, remember to bring **your hospital card or RAMQ card** as well as **your prescription, if necessary.**

Sampling method



STEPS TO FOLLOW

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Open the container and lay the cap inside up without touching the inside of the cap.
3. Cough up secretions and collect the first sputum of the morning in the sterile container.
4. Close the cap tightly to prevent spillage.

REMINDER: If your doctor has requested two or three specimens, repeat these steps with new containers. Mark the date and time of each sample in the designated area when returning the containers.

