



# Instructions for collecting sputum for tuberculosis

We would like you to collect three early morning sputum (phlegm) samples.

You have been given an esky containing:

- A blue ice brick in a plastic bag to put into your **freezer** when you arrive home
- Three labelled sputum collection jars numbered 1, 2 and 3
- Three small brown paper bags
- These collection instructions.

It is essential you supply sputum from the lungs, **not** saliva from the mouth for this test. Breathing deeply while pressing firmly on the sides of your chest, followed by a deep cough, will help bring up the sputum.

If you have a problem producing the sputum, try closing the door to the bathroom and turning on the hot tap to fill the room with steam. **Please take care to avoid hot water overflow and scalding.** Sit in the steamy room for five to 10 minutes and then try again. Alternatively, have a warm shower or bath before trying to cough up the sputum.

## Instructions

**Please be careful not to touch the inside of the specimen collection jar.**

1. When you wake in the morning and before you eat or drink anything, or clean your teeth, cough up your first specimen into the sputum collection jar marked with the **number 1**. Please screw the lid tightly on the jar to avoid leakage.
2. Write the date and time on the sputum collection jar.
3. Place the collection jar into the small paper bag provided and store in the fridge, not the freezer.
4. Repeat steps 1 to 3 for the next two mornings using the sputum collection jars **numbered 2 and 3**.
5. As soon as possible after the last sputum has been collected, take the blue ice brick from the freezer and place into the esky with the three collected sputums to return them to the TB clinic or local Pathwest pathology laboratory.

**The specimens need to be kept cool and out of sunlight during transport to the clinic or pathology laboratory.**



## WA Tuberculosis Control Program

📍 Anita Clayton Centre,  
1/311 Wellington Street, Perth WA 6000

☎ (+61) 08 9222 8500

✉ ACCadmin@health.wa.gov.au



We are proud to be a smoke-free site.  
Thank you for not smoking or vaping.

This document can be made available  
in alternative formats on request.