

# Tuberculosis (TB) sputum collection instructions

Information for the community

Three sputum samples are needed – one each morning for three days in a row.

Your doctor may ask you to collect the first sputum in the clinic before you go.

After the third day, take your samples to a SA Pathology collection point or give them to your health care worker.

## How to collect the sputum

There are pictures below that explain how to collect sputum.

- > The sputum (phlegm) should be coughed up from the chest (not the saliva that is always in the mouth).
- > This can be easiest to do in the morning.
- > Make sure you have not just eaten and don't have bits of food in your mouth.
- > It may also be easier if you have a hot shower, drink a hot drink, or lie down for a while first.
- > Only a small amount of sputum is required each day.
- > Please make sure the lid of the container is closed tight.
- > Please write the date of collection on the container.
- > Place the container in the provided bag and put it in the fridge.

### For more information:

Royal Adelaide Hospital, SA TB Services  
Telephone: (08) 7074 1089 (business hours)  
[www.sahealth.sa.gov.au](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au)

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SA Health

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**1** Be outside away from others

**2** Rinse mouth out with water

**3** Take three deep breaths in-and-out

**4** Cough from deep in your lungs

**5** Cough up thick sputum into open jar

**6** Repeat breaths and cough to get 2mL

**7** Screw lid tight and return jar to nurse

Thick sputum ✓

Thin saliva ✗

**Thank you! We are testing to protect you and your family from TB!**