

Collecting a sample of sputum (Phlegm)



You may be asked by a service user's family or the GP to assist in collecting a sputum sample from the service user. This is relatively simple procedure however it is recognised that not all support staff will be comfortable carrying out this procedure. If you have any difficulties with being asked to do this, please consult with your line manager or the training and development department.

Infection control procedures apply
Always wear suitable protective equipment – apron and gloves

- Ensure **privacy and dignity** for the service user
- Often, sputum (phlegm) is collected in the morning although not always
- Explain to the service user what you are about to do and if they wish you to proceed
- Prepare any equipment you will need before you start
- Ask the service user to sit up and make them comfortable
- Firstly, ask them or assist them to wash their mouth out with water (not mouthwash) to prevent contamination of the sputum
- Ask the service user to spit out the water out in a bowl and wipe their face so it is clean
- Ask them to expectorate – cough up and spit out sputum (phlegm) into the appropriate sterile sample pot
- Have paper tissues available for them to wipe their face after expectorating
- Make sure the service user is comfortable
- Immediately, seal the specimen pot lid and label the specimen container appropriately
- Put the specimen container into a specimen bag for transit to the relevant place for testing
- Clear away all equipment to its correct storage and dispose of tissues and your PPE's etc. into a bag and outside bin
- **Wash hands thoroughly**