



## Instructions for Submitting Sputum Samples to the MDH Public Health Laboratory (PHL) for Acid-Fast Bacilli (AFB) Smear and Culture

These instructions are intended for use by *public health nurses at local health departments* in Minnesota who have consulted with an MDH TB Nurse Case Manager regarding the need for obtaining sputa from a client with confirmed or suspected active TB.

1. Obtain supplies (at no charge) from the MDH PHL by completing “Request for Laboratory Supply Materials” form ([www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/idlab/forms.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/idlab/forms.html)). **For each sputum to be collected, order one “AFB kit” and one “Public Health Agency Shipper.”**
2. Teach patient how to provide and handle a sputum sample. Instructions in English and 13 other languages can be found at [www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/tb/basics/factsheets/sputum.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/tb/basics/factsheets/sputum.html). The specimen should be refrigerated overnight if necessary but should NOT be frozen or left at room temperature for a long period of time (this can cause overgrowth with other bacteria and may invalidate test results.)
3. **Complete “Clinical Testing and Submission” form** ([www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/idlab/forms.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/idlab/forms.html)). **Complete ALL of the requested information! (Instructions are available)**
  - a. Write **“not needed”** in **“Fee Sticker”** box in the upper-right hand corner.
  - b. Under “Facility Info,” list your **public health agency** (not the patient’s clinic).
  - c. In “Specimen or Isolate Source Information,” check “Specimen,” “Sputum,” and “Expectorated,” and fill in collection date and collection time.
  - d. Under “Test Requested,” check both “Mycobacterial Smear and Culture” and “Mycobacterial ID.”
4. Package and mail:
  - a. Follow packaging instructions that come with the containers.
  - b. Include Clinical Testing and Submission form.
  - c. If you do not have the correct container, call to obtain supplies or call your MDH TB Nurse Consultant.
  - d. Courier service to the MDH lab is available in some settings. Call for lab procedure assistance.
  - e. Box, include ice pack, and ship via Fed Ex or UPS to the MDH lab, using this street address:

**Minnesota Department of Health  
Public Health Laboratory  
Specimen Handling  
601 Robert Street North  
St. Paul, MN 55155-2531**

Questions about obtaining supplies: 651-201-4953

Questions about laboratory procedure: 651-201-5053

Questions about TB nurse case management of specific patients: 651-201-5414

Tuberculosis Program  
PO Box 64975  
St. Paul, MN 55164-0975  
651-201-5414 or 1-877-676-5414  
[www.health.state.mn.us/tb](http://www.health.state.mn.us/tb)