



Instructions for Patients (Self-Collection)

When to Collect

- Follow your healthcare provider's instructions on when to collect your specimens.
- If no specific times were given, collect three (3) sputum specimens on three consecutive days (for example, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday).
- Collect each specimen right after waking up, before eating, drinking, or brushing your teeth.
 - If you work night shifts, collect the specimen when you regularly wake up for the day.
- Each specimen should be collected about 8 to 24 hours apart, unless your healthcare provider provides you with different instructions.
- Each specimen should contain about **5–10 mL** (about one to two teaspoons) of sputum.
- Return specimens to your provider as soon as possible; otherwise, **keep refrigerated and do not freeze.**

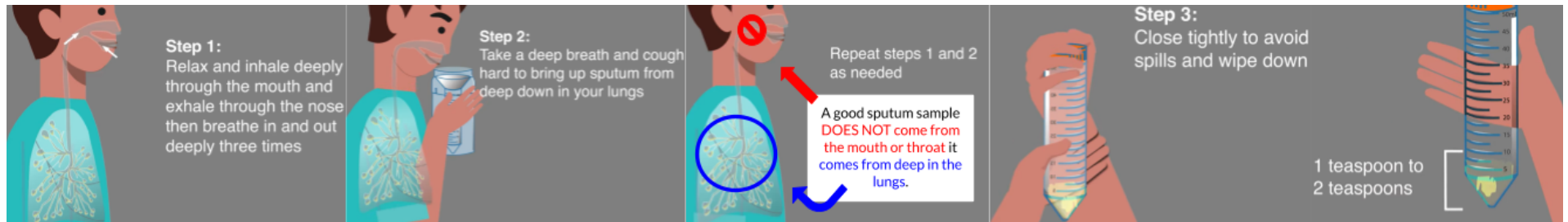
How to Collect

1. **Before Collecting:**
 - Do **NOT** brush your teeth, rinse your mouth with mouthwash, or gargle.
 - Wash your hands thoroughly.
2. **Collecting the Specimen:**
 - Sit or stand upright.
 - Take several (3) **deep breaths** (fill your chest), inhaling fully and exhaling forcefully.
 - On the next deep breath, **cough deeply** from your lungs to bring up mucus.
 - **Spit the sputum directly into the provided sterile container.** The collection containers are sterile and should be opened only when putting in the specimen.
3. **Important Information:**
 - The specimen must come from **deep in your lungs**, not saliva or mucus from your mouth or throat.
 - **Saliva is not acceptable** and can cause inaccurate results.

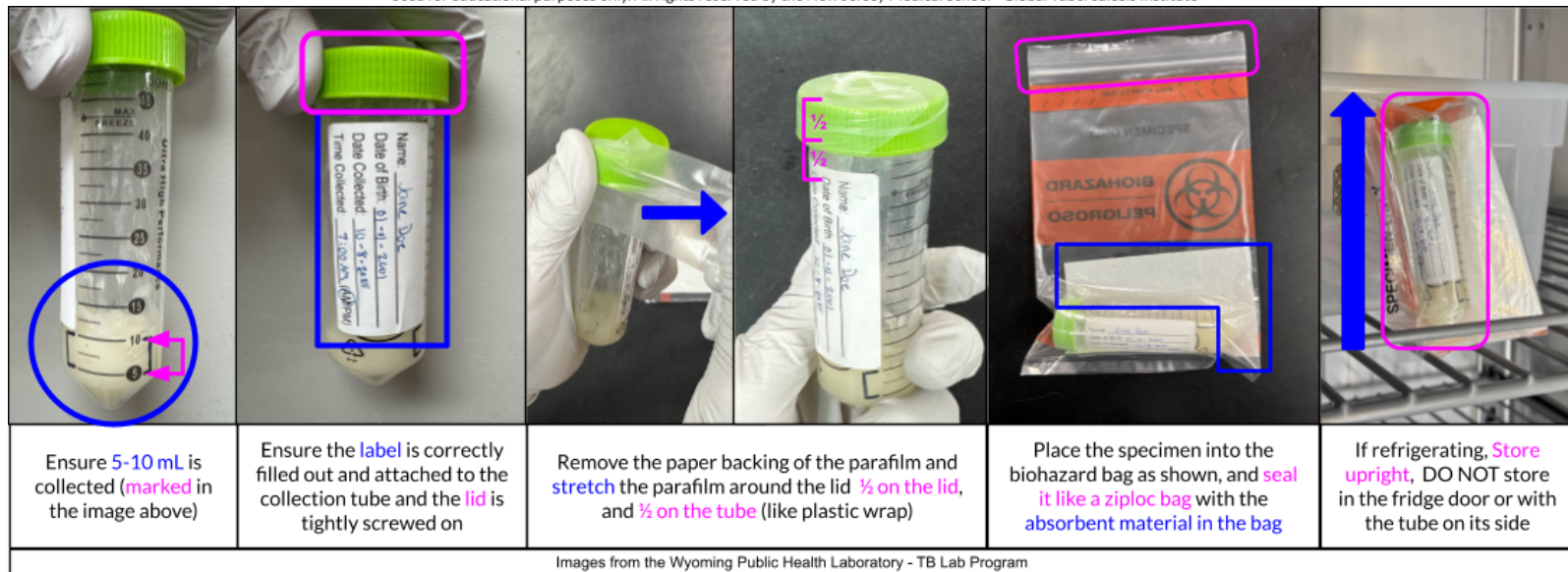
After Collection

1. **Seal** the container tightly.
2. **Label** the container **clearly** with:
 - a. Your Full Name - First, Middle initial (if applicable), and Last
 - b. Date of Birth - Day, Month, Year (DD, MM, YYYY)
 - c. Date of Collection - Day, Month, Year (DD, MM, YYYY)
 - d. Approximate Time of Collection - AM/PM (i.e., 7:00 AM)
3. If provided, **seal the lid with Parafilm** to prevent leaks. *Parafilm is used like plastic wrap. Place it ½ on the lid and ½ on the tube. Stretch and wrap it around the tube to create a seal. If the parafilm breaks or is not included, secure the lid tightly and proceed to the next step.*
4. **Place** the container into the **biohazard specimen bag** and **seal the bag**. **Do not remove the absorbent material inside the bag.**
5. Return each sample to your nurse, hospital, or clinic on the same day **whenever possible**.
6. **Store in a Refrigerator** if there is a delay in returning the specimen. **DO NOT FREEZE.**

Images of a properly collected specimen



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Make sure the sample comes from deep within your lungs. Mucus from your nose or throat, sinus drainage, or saliva ("spit") is **not** sputum.

A small amount of saliva in the tube is fine, as long as **most of the sample is true sputum** from your lungs.

The collection tubes are **sterile**. Only **open the tube when you are ready to collect your sample**.

If you need to store the sample in the refrigerator, **keep it upright** in the **provided biohazard bag**. Avoid placing the sample **on its side** or **in the refrigerator door**.

Additional TB resources, including **Sputum Collection Instructional videos**, can be found at [health.wyo.gov](https://health.wyo.gov/publichealth/communicable-disease-unit/tuberculosis/tb-education-and-training/) » Public Health Division » Communicable Disease Unit » Tuberculosis » TB Education and Training.

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