



**Armstrong Center for
Medicine and Health Hospital
Laboratory Information: (724) 534-8123**

SPUTUM SPECIMEN COLLECTION INSTRUCTIONS

1. The sputum specimen obtained should be the result of a deep cough and be of a thick nature, not saliva. Collection of an early morning specimen before breakfast will help the patient produce sputum since the respiratory secretions will buildup overnight while the patient is resting (**Do not use mouthwash or gargle before collection**).
2. The patient should cough directly into the sterile collection container provided. Label the container with the patient's first and last name, birth date, specimen type and date/time of collection.
3. Place the specimen into the plastic bag with the orange label. Make sure the doctor's order is in the outer pocket of the plastic bag.
4. It is important to transport the sputum to the laboratory within two hours of being obtained or, if delayed, to refrigerate the specimen.