

Home Collection of Cultures

*****All Cultures should be brought to Quest as soon as possible. If unable to be dropped off at the lab within 2 hours, please refrigerate until drop off*****

Expectorated Sputum (Sample in a Sterile Cup)

This is the optimal collection method for sputum samples and should be attempted first if age appropriate



- Open cup while keeping the inside of the cup and lid sterile. Do not touch these surfaces.
- Have your child cough and do airway clearance to obtain sputum sample
- Once sputum is felt at the back of the throat, spit it into the cup
- Sample should not be completely clear (all spit) – if this is the case please continue with coughing and airway clearance until you are able to produce a sample of sputum
- Replace lid onto cup and label with patient sticker
- Place in bio hazard bag with lab requisition
- Drop off at Quest within 2 hours or refrigerate until able to be dropped off

Throat Culture



- Timing throat culture after airway clearance will help to get the best sample possible
- Try to avoid doing a throat culture within 60 minutes after eating or drinking (aside from water)
- Open throat culture package
- Open tube and place cap upside down (inside of tube and cap need to remain sterile)
- Grasp the culture swab above the red line
- Have your child cough or do huffing until able to cough (if age appropriate)
- Have your child open wide and say “Aah”
- Swab back of throat (behind tongue) while trying to avoid touching other parts of the mouth with the end of the swab
- Coughing or some gagging is desired for a good sample – you will need to re-swab trying to go further back in the throat to make sure the sample is as good as we can get
- Place culture swab into tube and break off the top of the stick (above the red line) – discard
- Replace cap onto tube and label tube with patient sticker
- Place in bio hazard bag with lab requisition
- Drop off at Quest within 2 hours or refrigerate until able to be dropped off