

4. Specimen collection for NAATs

Patients initially evaluated for pulmonary TB should have three respiratory specimens collected or induced (including an early morning specimen), separated by at least eight (8) hours, and each sent for AFB smear and culture; a NAAT should be performed on at least one of these

specimens. **Table 1** provides guidance on when a second NAAT should be ordered. When more than one NAAT is ordered, consecutive NAATs should be performed on specimens collected at least eight (8) hours apart.

To assist with interpretation of NAAT results, NAAT should be performed on respiratory specimens that will also have concomitant AFB smear and cultures performed. However, when this is not possible (e.g., due to insufficient specimen volume for all three tests), two simultaneous specimens should be collected for 1) NAAT and 2) AFB smear and culture. All specimens should be collected following standard infection control procedures in an appropriate environment (e.g., airborne infection isolation room, respiratory induction booth) and with appropriate respiratory protective measures for healthcare workers.