

Collection Instructions: Stool Specimens for Microbiology Testing

Your doctor has ordered tests to be performed on a stool specimen. These tests show if pathogenic (abnormal) bacteria or parasites are growing in your bowel. Results of the test help your doctor treat your symptoms more accurately.

There are different kinds of stool tests; please follow the instructions for the type of test your doctor has ordered.

Culture for Bacteria

Collection: One specimen is usually enough. **DO NOT** collect more than one specimen a day. **DO NOT** bring in infant diapers.

Container: One (1) Cary Blair vial is labeled “enteric pathogens”. Caps have spoons attached with pink fluid inside cup. Mix specimen well.

Delivery: Bring the specimens to lab within forty eight (48) hours* of collection. Store in refrigerator. **DO NOT** freeze the specimens.

Results: Results are usually available in one (1) to three (3) days.

Ova and Parasite Exam

Collection: One specimen every other day or three (3) specimens over a ten (10) day period. **DO NOT** collect more than one (1) specimen a day. **DO NOT** bring in infant diapers.

Container: One (1) Unifix or Ecofix. Caps have spoon attached; with light green fluid inside cup. Mix specimen well. **The fluid in the vial is poisonous.**

Delivery: Bring specimens to lab within two (2) weeks.* Specimens may be submitted at the same time. Store specimens at room temperature. **DO NOT** freeze specimens.

Results: Results are usually available in three (3) days.

C. difficile Panel

Collection: One specimen is usually enough. **DO NOT** collect more than one specimen a day. **DO NOT** bring in infant diapers. The doctor may order additional tests based on the results of the first test.

Container: One (1) sterile screw-top urine cup, without preservatives.

Delivery: Bring specimen to lab within four (4) days* of collection. ***Store in refrigerator at 2-8°C. DO NOT** freeze specimen.

Results: Results are usually available the same day.

Giardia Antigen

Collection: One specimen is usually enough. **DO NOT** collect more than one specimen a day. **DO NOT** bring in infant diapers. The doctor may order additional tests based on the results of the first test.

Container: One (1) Cary Blair vial is labeled “enteric pathogens”. Caps have spoons attached with pink fluid inside cup. Mix specimen well.

Delivery: Bring specimens to lab within two (2) weeks* of collection. Store in refrigerator. **DO NOT** freeze specimens.

Results: Results are usually available in one (1) to three (3) days.

*The sooner specimens are submitted to laboratory, the sooner your doctor will have the results.

☐ **Stool for Lactoferrin (White Blood Cells)**

Collection: One specimen is usually enough.

Container: Collect in clean container.

Delivery: Store specimen refrigerated or at room temperature and bring to lab within two (2) weeks.* Store specimens at room temperature or in refrigerator. **DO NOT** freeze specimens.

Results: Results are usually available the same day.

☐ **Rotavirus**

Collection: One specimen is usually enough.

Container: Collect in clean container.

Delivery: Refrigerate specimen and bring to lab within 24 hours.*

Results: Results are usually available the same day.

How to collect specimen:

1. Bring collection container into bathroom.
2. Urinate into toilet first.
3. Put Saran Wrap (or a similar wrap) over the toilet seat. Catch the stool specimen in the Saran Wrap. A clean empty plastic container can also be used to collect a specimen.
4. Fill all specimen containers.

For Enteric Pathogen Transport Media, Ecofix, or Unifix containers:

- Use the spoons attach to the lids.
- Fill the vials to the red FILL line. **DO NOT** overfill.
- **Do not interchange caps in the filling process.**
- Recap. Shake hard.
- Refrigerate Enteric Pathogen Transport Media.
- Wash hands with soap and water.
- Keep Ecofix or Unifix at room temperature or refrigerated (see test specifications above) and deliver to laboratory within times specified above.

If collecting fresh stool:

- Use a disposable tool such as a plastic spoon or wooden ice cream stick.
- Transfer a walnut size piece of stool into any clean container.
- Wash hands with soap and water.
- Bring to the laboratory **within 1 hour** of collection.

Labeling

Label each specimen container with the following:

- Last name, first name
- Date and time of collection

Special instructions for children in diapers:

1. Apply a pediatric urine collection bag; this prevents contamination of the stool with urine.
2. Line the diaper with Saran Wrap or turn diaper inside out so the plastic coating is against the skin.
3. **DO NOT** let urine or water touch specimens for the ova and parasite exam.

*The sooner specimens are submitted to laboratory, the sooner your doctor will have the results.