

facts about...

Laboratory – Occult Blood

Description: The occult blood test looks for very small amounts of blood in feces (stool). The following instructions are intended to help you collect a specimen that will provide the most accurate results for the test your clinician has requested. Please read the instructions carefully and then follow each of the steps to ensure proper specimen collection.

What to expect: You will be given occult blood test card(s) (provided by the Laboratory) to take home with you. Please read carefully and follow the preparation and collection instructions listed below. Results of testing will be available to your clinician within two days.

What to do: **Note:** If you are bleeding from a condition such as hemorrhoids or menstruation that could contaminate your stool with blood, then it is advised that you should not be tested while the bleeding is active.

Diet and drug restrictions:

Some foods and drugs interfere with this test.

- For seven (7) days before and during the stool collection period, avoid non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen (e.g., Advil), Naproxen (e.g., Aleve) or aspirin (no more than one adult aspirin a day). Acetaminophen (Tylenol) may be taken as needed.
- For three (3) days before and during the stool collection period, avoid Vitamin C in excess of 250 mg a day from supplements, citrus fruits or juices. The recommended daily amount of Vitamin C for an adult is 60 mg a day. Some iron supplements also contain Vitamin C in excess of 250 mg.
- For three (3) days before and during the stool collection period, avoid red meats (including beef, lamb and liver). Eat a well balanced diet including fiber such as bran cereals, non-citrus fruits and vegetables.
- If you have any questions regarding your regular medication, discuss them with your clinician or your pharmacist.

Use of the Hemocult® Test Card:

1. Using a ball-point pen, write your name, date of birth, and address on the front of each Hemocult slide. **Do not tear the sections apart.** Fill in sample collection date on section 1 before a bowel movement.
2. Collect the stool specimen in one of the following ways:
 - Pass the stool directly into any clean, dry container such as a bedpan,

facts about...

wide-mouthed jar, margarine tub, or any other similar container. Do not allow urine or toilet bowl water to contaminate the specimen.

OR

- Pass urine into the toilet if you feel the need. Lift the toilet seat. Place sheets of plastic wrap (e.g. Saran wrap™) over the toilet bowl, leaving a small dip in the center. Place the toilet seat down. Pass the stool onto the plastic wrap.
- 3. Open front of section 1. Use one applicator stick to collect a small sample of the stool specimen. Apply a thin smear of stool that will cover Box A. Collect second sample from different part of stool with same stick. Apply a thin smear of stool to cover Box B. Discard stick in a waste container. **Do not flush stick.**
- 4. Close and secure front flap of section 1 by inserting it under tab. **Store slide in any paper envelope until the next day. Important: This allows the sample to "air dry."**
- 5. Repeat steps 1-4 for the next two days, using sections 2 and 3.
- 6. Remember to wash your hands thoroughly after collecting each specimen.
- 7. Keep the slides at room temperature until you bring them to the Hospital. Protect the slides from heat and light. Bring the slides to the Hospital as soon as possible after all specimens have been collected. The completed slides are stable for up to 14 days.
- 8. After all specimens are collected, you may resume your normal diet.

Alternate Method of performing the test:

1. Collect the specimen in any clean, dry container that has a tight-fitting lid.
2. Be sure the patient name is written clearly on the outside of the container, including date and time of collection.
3. Bring the container with the stool sample inside to the Hospital as soon as possible. If occult blood is the only test ordered, refrigerate the specimen until delivery to the Hospital is possible. If other tests are ordered, deliver the specimen to the Hospital immediately without storage.

Who to call if you have questions:

If you have questions or would like additional information, ***if you have*** please call Microbiology at (847) 570-2733.