Collecting Stool Samples for Bacterial Culture, 
Clostridium difficile Test, Rotavirus, 
H. pylori, and/or Ova and Parasites

How to Collect a Stool Sample

About the collection containers

• Depending on the tests ordered, you have one empty container with an orange lid, or a collection “kit” with one empty container and one container with a preservative called “SAF”

CAUTION

• The SAF solution is poisonous; keep out of reach of children
• If swallowed, drink lots of milk or water and IMMEDIATELY call the POISON Centre 1-800-332-1414 (option 1)

Before collecting the sample(s)

• DO NOT use a laxative before collecting the stool sample
• Empty bladder (pee) completely (so stool sample is not contaminated with urine)

NOTE: the following groups of medication should not be used for the period indicated before collecting specimens for the H. pylori antigen test:
• Proton pump inhibitors (H+K+-ATPase inhibitor) – 14 days
• Antibiotics – 28 days
• Bismuth preparations, e.g., Peptol Bismol – 14 days

How to collect the sample(s)

• If you need to collect more than one stool sample (i.e. X3) collect each sample on a different day
• Collect the stool sample into any clean, dry disposable container or onto plastic wrap placed under the toilet seat, or waxed cardboard container
• DO NOT let water touch the stool sample

DIAPERS

DO NOT submit stool sample in diapers. For small children with diarrhea, or liquid stool, fasten a diaper liner (e.g. plastic kitchen wrap) to the diaper using childproof safety pins. Remove the stool sample from the diaper using a disposable plastic spoon and put into the container(s) following the steps below.

Adding stool to the containers

• Take parts of the stool that look bloody or slimy (contain mucous/pus).
• Fill each container at least 1/3 full, or add enough stool to bring the fluid to the fill line if present. DO NOT overfill. Replace the lids. For the SAF container, shake the stool and SAF until well mixed.

After Collecting the sample(s)

1. Wash hands thoroughly.
2. Label all container(s) with:
   • Full first and last name AND Personal Health Number (PHN) or Personal Identification Number (e.g. Refugee, Immigration, Passport, etc.)
   • Sample type (i.e. stool)
   • Date and time the sample was collected

   If you need to collect samples on different days, write #1, #2, etc. on each container to indicate the order the samples were collected.
3. For each sample collected, write the date and time the specimen was collected on the requisition with the corresponding number belonging to the specimen (i.e. #1, #2 ) in the “Date & Time Collected:” space at the bottom of the Microbiology requisition
4. Refrigerate specimens, or keep in a cool place, until you take them to the lab.
5. Take the specimen and requisition to the lab as soon as possible - within 8 hours after collecting to allow for transportation and sample processing.

Samples that are not labelled correctly or do not have a completed requisition will not be tested.

Questions? Call the Laboratory Information Centre at 403-770-3600.