

Preparation, Collection and Preservation Instructions for Stool Specimens

Please read all of the instructions before collection. The healthcare provider has requested this stool collection as part of the patient's care. Proper collection and preservation of the specimen is essential for accurate test results.

Preparation:

- Please notify the healthcare provider of all medications (prescription and over-the-counter) and herbal supplements prior to starting the collection process.
- The patient may need to follow special dietary instructions during this time period if instructed by the healthcare provider.
- If testing for Ova and Parasite (O and P):
 - Do not collect for at least 3 days after the patient has received barium, oil, magnesium or other crystalline compounds.
- If testing for Helicobacter pylori Stool Antigen (HPSA or H. pylori):
 - Taking antibiotics, Pepto Bismol[®] (bismuth), or proton pump inhibitors (Prilosec[®] or Prevacid[®]) within 2 weeks of specimen collection may cause a false-negative result.
- If testing for Occult Blood:
 - For 7 days prior to and during the collection, do not use aspirin or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen. Note: Acetaminophen (Tylenol[®] or generic equivalent) is allowed.
 - For 3 days prior to and during the collection, eat a well-balanced diet with the following modifications:
 - Do not have Vitamin C in excess of 250 mg per day from all sources (dietary and supplemental). Note: the 100% of RDA for Vitamin C is 60 mg. Also, some iron supplements contain Vitamin C which exceeds 250 mg per day.
 - Do not consume red meat including rare, cooked or processed beef, lamb or liver.
 - Do not consume raw broccoli, cauliflower, horseradish, melons, parsnips, radishes, or turnips.
- All containers and cards should be labeled with the patient's legal name and date of birth or with a laboratory label. More than one container may be necessary depending on the testing requested to accommodate differing preservation requirements.

Collection:

- Use the large collection container provided that fits underneath the toilet seat to collect the stool.
- Do not contaminate the stool sample with urine.
- After the stool has been collected, follow the instructions for preservation of the stool for each of the requested tests.
- Do not remove any liquid preservative if seen in a storage container.
- If collecting a stool specimen from a patient who wears diapers:
 - Do not send the diaper to the laboratory.
 - Remove the stool from the diaper with a disposable item like a plastic spoon or clean unused popsicle stick.
 - If the stool is more liquid than solid, then place plastic wrap inside the diaper to obtain as much of the liquid specimen as possible.
- If unable to collect enough stool for the preservative containers (explained below), then do one of the following:
 - Place the stool in a clean dry container and bring to lab as soon as possible on day of collection. The lab may still be able to perform some if not all tests.
 - Collect the stool throughout the day and combine them to increase the amount of specimen up to the requirement.
 - But do not combine specimens from different days into one specimen container.

- After collection, the samples should be delivered to the laboratory as soon as possible. To prevent leaks, make sure all lids are on tightly and that the containers are transported upright inside a plastic bag. Make sure to bring the order slip with the specimen if the laboratory does not already have a copy. Also, the laboratory will need insurance information and photo identification to register the patient before testing can be done.

Preservation:

- For Stool Culture (enteric pathogens):
 - Cary-Blair vial (green lid with pink liquid) is preferred for this test and preserves the stool for culture.
 - Carefully open the Cary-Blair vial so that no liquid is spilled and note the lid has an attached scoop.
 - Use the scoop to break up the stool. Add small portions of the stool to the container with the scoop until the level of the liquid reaches the fill line note on the vial's label. Do not overfill.
 - Recap the vial tightly and shake well to mix the stool thoroughly in the liquid.
 - Note the collection date and time on the container.
 - Store at room temperature until delivered to the lab within 3 days.
 - If you do not have a Cary-Blair vial, fresh unpreserved stool is also acceptable.
 - Place stool in a clean, dry container that seals tightly. The provided collection container is acceptable.
 - Note the collection date and time on the container.
 - Store at room temperature until delivered to the lab on day of collection. Do not refrigerate or freeze.
- For Ova and Parasite (O and P):
 - Make sure to read the above preparation information carefully.
 - Ecofix and Cary-Blair. (PVA vial (blue lid with blue liquid) and Formalin vial (pink lid with clear liquid) Acceptable for substitution.)
 - Open and fill one vial at a time to prevent mixing of liquids or spilling of vials.
 - Carefully open the first vial so that no liquid is spilled and note the lid has an attached scoop.
 - Use the scoop to break up the stool. Add small portions of the stool to the container with the scoop until the level of the liquid reaches the fill line note on the vial's label. Do not overfill.
 - Recap the vial tightly and shake well to mix the stool thoroughly in the liquid.
 - Note the collection date and time on the container.
 - Repeat process with the second vial.
 - Store at room temperature until delivered to the lab within 3 days.
 - Note: This Formalin vial can also be used for Giardia EIA and/or Cryptosporidium EIA.
- For Giardia EIA and/or Cryptosporidium (Crypto) EIA:
 - Cary-Blair. (Formalin vial (pink lid with clear liquid) is used to preserve stool for both of these tests.) Acceptable for substitution.)
Carefully open the Formalin vial so that no liquid is spilled and note the lid has an attached scoop
 - Use the scoop to break up the stool. Add small portions of the stool to the container with the scoop until the level of the liquid reaches the fill line note on the vial's label. Do not overfill.
 - Recap the vial tightly and shake well to mix the stool thoroughly in the liquid.
 - Note the collection date and time on the container.
 - Store at room temperature until delivered to the lab within 3 days.
 - Note: 1 Formalin vial is sufficient for both of these tests.
 - Ecofix. (If Ova and Parasite testing is also requested, the 1 Formalin vial can be used for both. Acceptable for substitution.)
- For Clostridium difficile Toxin (C. diff or CDT):
 - This test requires fresh, unpreserved stool. Formed stool is not acceptable.
 - Place stool in a clean, dry container that seals tightly. The provided collection container is acceptable.
 - Note the collection date and time on the container.
 - Store at refrigerated temperature until delivered to the lab within 3 days. Do not freeze.

- For *Helicobacter pylori* Stool Antigen (HPSA or *H. pylori*):
 - Make sure to read the above preparation information carefully.
 - This test requires fresh, unpreserved stool. Watery, diarrhea stools are not acceptable.
 - Place stool in a clean, dry container that seals tightly. The provided collection container is acceptable.
 - Note the collection date and time on the container.
 - Store at refrigerated temperature until delivered to the lab within 3 days.
 - If the specimen cannot be delivered to the lab within 3 days, the specimen may be frozen for up to 1 month.

- For Rotavirus:
 - This test requires fresh, unpreserved stool.
 - Specimens should be collected as soon as possible after the onset of symptoms. It is recommended that the specimen be collected during the acute phase of gastroenteritis because a large number of viral particles and viral antigens are excreted during this period.
 - Place stool in a clean, dry container that seals tightly. The provided collection container is acceptable.
 - Note the collection date and time on the container.
 - Store at refrigerated temperature until delivered to the lab within 3 days. Do not freeze.

- For Fecal Occult Blood:
 - Make sure to read the above preparation information carefully.
 - If requested 2 or 3 times, collect only 1 specimen per day on consecutive days.
 - Occult blood test cards are preferred for this test.
 - Open the flap on the patient name side.
 - Place a small amount of stool on one end of the applicator stick.
 - Apply a thin smear inside box A.
 - Reuse the applicator stick to obtain a second sample from a different area of the stool.
 - Apply a thin smear inside box B.
 - Let card air dry before closing the cover.
 - Use tab closure to secure cover over sample area.
 - Note the collection date and time on the patient name side of the card.
 - Store the card at room temperature, protecting from heat and light, until delivered to the lab within 7 days.
 - If you do not have an occult blood test card, fresh unpreserved stool is also acceptable.
 - Place stool in a clean, dry container that seals tightly. The provided collection container is acceptable.
 - Note the collection date and time on the container.
 - Store at refrigerated temperature until delivered to the lab within 3 days. Do not freeze.

- For Fecal WBC (fecal white blood cells or fecal leukocytes):
 - This test requires fresh, unpreserved stool.
 - Place stool in a clean, dry container that seals tightly. The provided collection container is acceptable.
 - Note the collection date and time on the container.
 - The specimen should be tested as soon as possible, preferably within a few hours.
 - Store at refrigerated temperature until delivered to the lab on day of collection.

- For Fecal Fat:
 - These tests require fresh, unpreserved stool.
 - Place stool in a clean, dry container that seals tightly. The provided collection container is acceptable.
 - Note the collection date and time on the container.
 - Store at refrigerated temperature until delivered to the lab within 3 days. Do not freeze.