

Stool Test

Tips for collecting a stool sample

How do I collect a stool sample?

Except for infants in diapers, all other children will follow the same steps. It is important that no urine or toilet water mix with the sample. They can interfere with the lab tests.

Please use the provided container. Jars or containers from home have detergents in them that can affect the results of your child's tests.

Your child may need you to ease their fears and help them transfer the sample into the provided container to bring to the doctor's office or lab.

For infants:

1. Line the inside of diaper with plastic wrap or use a urine collection bag provided by the clinic to collect stool sample. Using one of these methods will prevent the stool sample from being absorbed into the diaper. If using a urine collection bag -place the opening of the bag over the baby's anus. Press the adhesive to the skin avoiding the urinary opening.
2. Place the collected stool sample into the plastic collection container provided by clinic.



Diaper lined with plastic wrap

Older children in diapers:

If the child can not remove their own diaper, use the plastic wrap method described for infants. If they can remove their diaper, follow the steps for toilet trained children.

For toilet-trained children and teens:

Stool samples can be collected two ways. Both options prevent the sample from falling into the toilet water. Try to keep urine out of the sample. Supervise your child if they are small enough to remove the plastic wrap or collection hat.

If you are using a plastic collection "hat" provided by the clinic follow these steps:

1. Insert "hat" into toilet.
2. Ask your child to poop into the "hat"
3. Place collected stool sample into plastic collection container provided by the clinic.



Plastic "hat" from laboratory

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You can also collect the sample by stretching plastic wrap over the toilet bowl.

1. Lift the toilet seat and cover the top rim of the bowl with a large sheet of plastic wrap.
2. Make a small depression so there is a spot for the collection of the sample.
3. Lower the toilet seat cover and have your child poop.
4. Place collected stool sample into the container provided by the clinic.



Plastic wrap over toilet seat

How can I prepare my child?

Most older children do not like the idea of providing a stool sample for testing, even if they can do it in the privacy of their own bathroom.

- Talk about the steps in simple, honest language.
- Acknowledge embarrassment by saying something like “I know this may be embarrassing for you. It can be embarrassing for grownups too, but we need to do this because....” This will allow your child to express their feelings and accept your help.

The type of stool test your child is having is checked below. Please follow the instructions provided.

Bacterial culture

Amount needed: at least 1 gram (walnut or 1-inch ball size) of stool.

Collection and handling tips:

- No rectal swabs or diapers.
- Refrigerate the sample if delivery is delayed.
Sample tested for: Salmonella, Shigella, Campylobacter jejuni, Yersinia enterocolitica and E. coli 0157.

Ova and parasite examination

Amount needed: at least 1 gram (walnut or 1-inch ball size) of stool.

Collection and handling tips:

- Collect sample in a disposable, clean, leak-proof container.
- No rectal swabs or diapers.
- Samples containing barium are unacceptable. Obtain stool prior to barium procedure or at least 5 days after barium procedure.
- Deliver to the lab within 1 hour of collection. Some forms of parasites may be lost if not delivered within 1 hour of collection. Refrigerate the sample if delivery is delayed by more than 1 hour. Samples maybe refrigerated for delivery up to 8 hours.
- **If no parasites are seen in the first sample a second sample may be submitted. Samples should be collected at least 72 hours apart.**

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Stool (occult) blood

Amount needed: at least 1 gram of stool (walnut size) or a Hemoccult slide (obtained from doctor or clinic)

Collection and handling tips:

- Prior to collection avoid feeding your child red meat, turnips, horseradish, vitamin C (in excess of 250 mG/day), aspirin and anti-inflammatory drugs.
- Recommended foods are: small amounts of chicken and tuna, cooked fruits and vegetables, peanuts, popcorn, bran cereal.
- Keep refrigerated until delivered to lab.

Stool fat testing – one time collection

Amount needed: 1 gram (walnut size) of stool

Collection and handling tips:

- Your child must be off mineral oil for 3 days before collection.
- Stool must be fresh; less than 48 hours old.

72-Hour stool fat

Amount needed: As much sample as can be collected in 72 hours or until the container provided is half full. A second container should be obtained if this occurs.

Collection and handling tips:

- Refrigerate until delivered to the lab.
- Stool must be collected in a pre-weighed container from the Lab; no other container can be accepted.



- Patient must be off mineral oil compounds 3 days before collection.

Other special stool collections

Stool tests that **must** be delivered within 1 hour of collection – stool pH, stool reducing substances, and stool chloride.

TO LEARN MORE

- Laboratory (206) 987-2102
- Your Child's Health-Care Provider

Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Please call the Family Resource Center at (206) 987-2201.

This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Children's Hospital. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's health-care provider.