

## Stool Test

### 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.

Show them you understand by saying something like “I know this may be embarrassing for you. It can be uncomfortable for grownups too, but we need to do this because...” This will allow your child to express their feelings and accept your help.

### How do I collect a stool sample?

It is important that no urine or toilet water mix with the sample. They can interfere with the lab (laboratory) tests. Please use the container provided. Jars or containers from home have detergents in them that can change the results of your child's tests.

#### For children in diapers:



1. Line the inside of diaper with plastic wrap or use a urine collection bag provided by the clinic. Using one of these 2 collection methods will keep 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. Put the stool sample into the container provided.

#### For toilet-trained children and teens:

Stool samples can be collected 2 ways. Both options prevent the sample from falling into the toilet. If stool falls into the toilet water or is mixed with urine, do not submit to lab. Watch your child if they are young and do not understand that urine must be separated from stool.

If you are using a plastic “hat” provided by the clinic, follow these steps:

1. First have your child empty their bladder, “pee without pooping”
2. Insert “hat” into toilet.
3. Ask your child to poop into the “hat.”
4. Put the last part of the stool collected, the softest part, into the container provided.
5. If stool is hanging from the anus, instead of wiping, collect this to submit to lab.



## Stool Test: Tips for collecting a stool sample

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

1. Lift the toilet seat and cover the entire bowl with a large sheet of plastic wrap. If the plastic wrap does not stick to toilet, you may need to use tape to secure it.
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 stool sample into the container provided.

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

**72-Hour stool fat**

**Amount needed:** Collect as much sample as you can in 72 hours. Only fill the container provided until it is half full. Fill a second container if needed.

**Collection and handling tips:**

- Keep in refrigerator until delivered to the lab.
- Stool must be collected in a pre-weighed container from the Lab; no other containers can be accepted.
- Your child must be off mineral oil 3 days before collection.

**Bacterial culture**

**Amount needed:** collect stool the size of a walnut or 1-inch ball.

**Collection and handling tips:**

- No rectal swabs or diapers.
- Keep in the refrigerator until delivered to the lab.
- Sample tested for: Salmonella, Shigella, Campylobacter jejuni, Yersinia enterocolitica and E. coli 0157.

**Stool (occult) blood**

**Amount needed:** collect stool the size of a walnut or 1-inch ball or a Hemoccult slide (obtained from doctor or clinic).

**Collection and handling tips:**

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

## Stool Test: Tips for collecting a stool sample

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### To Learn More

- Laboratory  
206-987-2102
- Ask your child's  
healthcare provider
- [www.seattlechildrens.org](http://www.seattlechildrens.org)

### Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask  
your child's nurse.
- From outside the  
hospital, call the  
toll-free Family  
Interpreting Line  
1-866-583-1527. Tell  
the interpreter the  
name or extension  
you need.
- For Deaf and hard of  
hearing callers  
206-987-2280 (TTY)

### Stool fat testing - one time collection

**Amount needed:** collect stool the size of a walnut or 1-inch ball.

#### Collection and handling tips:

- Your child cannot take mineral oil for 3 days before collection.
- Stool must be fresh; less than 48 hours old.

### Ova and parasite examination

**Amount needed:** collect stool the size of a small bean or pea.

#### Collection and handling tips for fresh stool:

- Deliver to the lab within 1 hour of collection. Keep in the refrigerator if you are unable to deliver within 1 hour. Samples may be refrigerated for up to 8 hours.
- Collect sample in a disposable, clean, leak-proof container.
- No rectal swabs.
- Diaper samples must be collected using plastic wrap collection.
- Collect stool before or at least 5 days after a barium procedure.
- If no parasites are seen in the first sample, a second and third sample may be requested. Samples should be collected at least 72 hours apart.

#### Collection and handling tips when using an EcoFix container with preservative solution:

- Open the container containing the liquid. Use the collection spoon built into the lid to place small scoops of stool into the container. Take stool from the end that exited your child last. Place enough stool in the solution so that the contents rise to the red line on the container.
- It is important to keep the solution away from your child. The liquid is poisonous. If it gets on the skin or in the eyes, rinse the area with water. If the skin or eyes are still irritated, call your child's healthcare provider.
- Swallowing the solution may be dangerous. If your child swallows it, take them to the emergency room right away. Watch to make sure they are breathing normally. Bring the container and label with you when your child is treated.

### Other special stool collections

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

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Seattle Children's offers interpreter services for Deaf, hard of hearing or non-English speaking patients, family members and legal representatives free of charge. Seattle Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Call the Family Resource Center at 206-987-2201.

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

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