

Stool Test

Tips for collecting a stool sample

How can I prepare my child?

Many older children do not like the idea of giving a sample of their stool (poop) for testing, even if they can do it in their own bathroom. Talk to your child about the steps using simple, honest words.

Show them you understand by saying something like “I know this may be embarrassing for you. It can be awkward 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 stool sample. These can interfere with testing. Please use the collection container given to you. Do not use jars or containers from home. They have detergents in them that can change the results of your child’s tests.

Follow these directions for children in diapers:

There are two ways to collect a stool sample. Line the inside of the diaper with plastic wrap (see picture) OR use the collection bag given to you by clinic or the lab. This will keep the stool sample from being absorbed into the diaper.

If you use the plastic wrap lining:

Use the wooden stick given to you to transfer the stool from the plastic wrap into the container provided .

If you use a collection bag:

1. You will need to place the opening of the bag over your baby’s anus (the hole where the stool comes out).
2. Peel off the white sticker from the bag to expose the adhesive.
3. Press the adhesive firmly on to the skin around the anus to keep any urine from getting into the bag.
4. Once your child has stooled (poop) into the bag, slowly peel off the bag. Place the collection bag upright into the container provided.



To Learn More

- Laboratory
206-987-2102
- Ask your child’s healthcare provider
- seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your 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 toilet-trained children and teens :

There are two ways to collect a stool sample. Both options prevent the sample from falling into the toilet. Pick the one that will work best for your child.

If the stool falls into the toilet water or is mixed with urine, do not collect it for testing. Watch your child if they are young and might not understand that their urine must be kept separate from the stool being collected.

The clinic or lab can provide you with a plastic collection device called a “hat” to help you collect the stool sample. The hat covers part of the toilet seat to make it easier to collect. If you choose to use a hat, follow these steps:

1. First have your child urinate into the toilet, without pooping.
2. Put the collection hat onto the toilet seat as pictured.
3. Ask your child to then poop into the collection hat.
4. Use the wooden stick given to you to transfer the stool from the hat into the collection container. Put the last part of the stool, the softest part, into the collection container.



You can also collect a stool sample by stretching plastic wrap over the toilet as shown.

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 the toilet, you may need to use tape to secure it.
2. Make a small dip in the plastic so there is a place for the stool to collect.
3. Lower the toilet seat cover and have your child poop onto the plastic wrap.
4. Using the wooden stick given to you, transfer the last part of the stool into the collection container given to you.



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

Bacterial Culture

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

Collection and handling tips:

- Do not use rectal swabs to collect the sample.
- Diaper samples must be collected using the plastic wrap collection method described above.
- Keep the container refrigerated until you bring it to the lab.
- Bring the sample to the lab **within 2 hours** of collection. If you are unable to deliver the sample within 2 hours, the sample may be refrigerated for up to 24 hours.
- The sample will be tested for: Salmonella, Shigella, Campylobacter jejuni, Yersinia enterocolitica and E. coli O157.

Stool (Occult) Blood

Amount needed: There are two ways to collect the sample. You can either collect stool the size of a walnut or 1-inch ball into the container provided, **OR** smear a small amount (about the size of a small bean or pea) on to a Hemoccult card (given to you by the doctor or clinic). It is important that you follow these collection instructions. If the sample is more or less than instructed, we might ask you to repeat collection.

Collection and handling tips:

- If you will be using the collection container method, bring the sample to the lab **within 36 hours of collection**. It must be kept refrigerated until you bring it to the lab.
- If instead, you will be using the Hemoccult card method, bring the sample to the lab **within 14 days of collection**. Keep the card at room temperature (protected from light and heat) until you bring it to the lab.
- Avoid feeding your child red meat, turnips, horseradish, vitamin C (in excess of 250 mg/day), aspirin and anti-inflammatory medicine before you collect the sample.
- Recommended foods to eat: small amounts of chicken and tuna, cooked fruits and vegetables, peanuts, popcorn, bran cereal.

Ova and Parasite (Helminth) examination

Amount needed: collect unformed (loose) stool the size of a small bean or pea, or liquid stool that is a half-inch deep in the container provided.

Collection and handling tips:

- Bring the sample to the lab **within 2 hours** of collection. If you are unable to deliver the sample within 2 hours, the sample may be refrigerated for up to 24 hours.
- Do not use rectal swabs to collect the sample.
- Diaper samples must be collected using the plastic wrap collection method described above.
- Collect stool before, or at least 5 days after, your child has had a barium procedure.
- If no parasites are seen in the first sample, you may be asked to get a second and third sample. Samples should be collected at least 72 hours apart.
- Collection and handling tips when using an EcoFix container with preservative solution for the ova and parasite test:
 1. Open the container that contains the liquid preservative. Use the collection spoon built into the lid to place small scoops of stool into the container. Take a sample from the last part of the stool that your child produced. Place enough stool in the solution so that the contents rise to the red line on the container.
 2. 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.
 3. It is unsafe to swallow the solution. If your child swallows it, take them to the emergency room right away. Watch them to make sure they are breathing normally. Bring the container and label with you when your child is treated.

Clostridium difficile Antigen and Toxin by EIA, plus Reflex PCR

Amount needed: collect unformed (loose) stool the size of a small bean or pea, or liquid stool that is a half-inch deep in the container provided.

Collection and handling tips:

- Bring the sample to the lab **within 1 hour** of collection. If you are unable to deliver the sample within 1 hour, the sample may be refrigerated for up to 24 hours.
- Keep the container refrigerated until you bring it to the lab.
- Rectal Swabs are not acceptable for this test and will be rejected.
- Samples collected in diapers should be transferred to the clean container provided.
- A minimum of 7 days is required before repeat testing can be performed.

Calprotectin, Stool

Amount needed: Collect formed (solid) stool in the amount of a 1-inch ball and place it in the container provided.

Collection and handling tips:

- Bring the sample to the lab within 5 days of collection. It may be kept at room temperature or refrigerated until you bring it to the lab.
- Stool collected in diapers or plastic bags must be transferred to the sterile container by the family.

Helicobacter pylori Antigen, Stool

Amount needed: Collect unformed (loose) stool in the amount of a 1-inch ball or liquid stool that is an inch deep in the container provided.

Collection and handling tips:

- The sample must be **refrigerated within 2 hours** of collection.
- Bring the sample to the lab **within 48 hours** of collection. It must be kept refrigerated during transport to the lab.
- Room temperature samples will be rejected.

Stool Giardia + Crypto EIA

Amount needed: Collect unformed (loose) stool the size of a walnut or liquid stool that is 1-inch deep in the container provided.

Collection and handling tips:

- Bring the sample to the lab **within 2 hours** of collection. If you are unable to deliver the sample within 2 hours, the sample may be refrigerated for up to 72 hours.
- Rectal swabs are not acceptable for this test. Specimens that have been concentrated or treated with PVA fixatives are also not acceptable for this test.

Stool Resistance Screen

Amount needed: Collect stool the size of a small bean/pea in the cup provided.

Collection and handling tips:

- Bring the sample to the lab **within 2 hours** of collection. If you are unable to deliver the sample within 2 hours, the sample may be refrigerated for up to 8 hours.
- Rectal swabs, rectal e-swabs, and samples in diapers are accepted, but are discouraged because of decreased test sensitivity.

Rapid Stool Infectious Diarrhea PCR Panel

Amount needed: Collect unformed (loose) stool the size of a walnut or liquid that is an inch deep in the container provided.

Collection and handling tips:

- Bring the sample to the lab **within 2 hours** of collection. If you are unable to deliver the sample within 2 hours, the sample may be refrigerated for up to 24 hours.
- Rectal swabs are not ideal.

Rapid Stool GI IBD Bloody Diarrhea PCR

Amount needed: Collect unformed (loose) stool the size of a walnut or liquid that is an inch deep in the container provided.

Collection and handling tips:

- Bring the sample to the lab **within 2 hours** of collection. If you are unable to deliver the sample within 2 hours, the sample may be refrigerated for up to 24 hours.
- Rectal swabs are not ideal.

Viral Pathogens (Norovirus, Adenovirus & Rotavirus) by PCR Qual, Stool

Amount needed: Collect stool the size of a walnut ball and place it into the container provided.

Collection and handling tips:

- Bring the sample to the lab **within 4 hours** of collection. If you are unable to deliver the sample within 4 hours, the sample may be refrigerated for up to 48 hours from the collection time.

Stool Fat – one-time collection

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

Collection and handling tips:

- Your child may not have laxatives, such as mineral or castor oils, or fat substitutes in their diet for 3 days before the stool collection.
- Diaper samples must be collected using the plastic wrap collection method described above.
- Bring the sample to the lab **within 1 hour** of collection. If you are unable to deliver the sample within 1 hour, the sample may be refrigerated for up to 5 days.
- Keep the container refrigerated until you bring it to the lab.

72-Hour Stool Fat

Amount needed: collect all of your child's stool over the next 72 hours. Only fill the container until it is half full. Then use a second container if needed.

Collection and handling tips:

- Keep the container refrigerated until you bring it to the lab.
- Stool must be collected in the pre-weighed container from the lab; no other containers may be used.
- Your child may not have laxatives, such as mineral or castor oils, or fat substitutes in their diet for 3 days before the stool collection.

Other special stool collections for Stool pH, Stool Reducing Substances and Stool Chloride

- Bring the sample to the lab **within 1 hour** of collection.
- Diaper samples must be collected using the plastic wrap collection method described above.

If you have additional questions about the stool collection process, you may contact the Laboratory at 206-987-2102.

When and where can I drop off a sample?

Samples may be delivered to the lab. For lab hours and locations, visit seattlechildrens.org/lab.

When will I know about the test results?

Results are sent to the doctor who ordered your child's test. Your child's doctor will explain the test results and answer your questions. Please contact your child's doctor for follow-up.