

COLLECTION OF STOOL SPECIMENS

Collection of Specimens for Microbiology

Proper transport and storage of specimens are prerequisites for reliable culture results. Ensure that the requisition and specimen are labeled with:

- patient's full name
- date of birth or health card number
- **source of specimen**
- date of collection
- time of collection

The examination requested should be specified on the requisition.

Information concerning anti-microbial therapy or allergy, pregnancy, clinical diagnosis, or underlying disease should also be noted.

Specimens should be transported promptly to LifeLabs Laboratory. Delays to processing, beyond the recommended acceptable holding times, will compromise culture results.

All specimens and body fluids are considered potentially hazardous. They should be treated as if capable of causing disease. Clinical information or patient history as provided by the physician determines the scope of the laboratory investigation by ensuring that all laboratory services are relevant or adequate for each clinical situation.

Collection of Stool Specimens

- Avoid barium, oil or magnesium before a stool collection.
- Wash and dry your hands.
- Urinate into the toilet if needed.
- Lift the toilet seat. Place sheets of plastic wrap (e.g., Saran wrap®) over the toilet bowl, leaving a slight dip in the center. Place the toilet seat down.
- Pass the stool onto the plastic wrap. OR Use a clean bowl or bedpan. Do not let urine or water touch the stool specimen.
- Open the container and transfer small portions of the stool into the appropriate container as described below. Do not overfill the container.
- Replace the cap and firmly tighten.
- Label the container with the patient's full name, date of birth or health card number, source of specimen and date and time of collection.
- Place in Ziploc® bag and seal carefully.
- Note that a leaking container may be **INFECTIOUS**.
- Wash and dry hands thoroughly.
- Indicate the date and time of collection on the requisition.

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Stool for Enteric Pathogens (Culture and Sensitivity)

To the **Cary Blair** container (white lid and pink fluid), add stool to the **Fill Line**. Tighten cap and ensure that specimen is well mixed. Refrigerate specimen at 2-8°C and submit to the laboratory WITHIN 24 hours of collection. Samples may be accepted up to 48 hours after collection.

Multiple stool specimens collected on the same day from the same patient for C&S will not be processed. The first specimen received will be processed.

OAML Guideline (CLP-O19) recommends that physicians submit a **single stool** specimen for C&S to determine the cause of acute diarrhea or to assess individuals suspected of having been infected in an outbreak situation (food poisoning).



Clostridium difficile Toxin

Collect 5-10 ml of liquid or soft stool in a labelled sterile container.

Store and ship specimen at 2-8 °C.

If delayed >72 hours from time of collection, freeze at -20 °C.

Dry or formed stool is unacceptable. Stool collected less than or equal to 7 days from a previously positive or negative specimen will be rejected.

Indeterminate and/or Invalid results will be confirmed by molecular testing.

