
How to Collect a Stool Sample for Gastroenteritis Outbreaks

ITEMS TO BE USED FOR COLLECTING STOOL SPECIMENS:

- a) Gastroenteritis outbreak kit containing:
 - 2 specimen containers:
 - 1 green-capped bottle containing transport medium for bacterial culture.
 - 1 white-capped top bottle with no transport medium for viral testing and *Clostridium perfringens* enterotoxin testing.
 - Requisition form located in a separate pouch at the front of the bag (your Toronto Public Health (TPH) investigator may provide a partially completed requisition).
 - Sealable plastic biohazard bag.
- b) *Gloves
- c) *Gown
- d) *Surgical mask
- e) *Eye protection or face shield

PROCEDURE FOR COLLECTING A STOOL SAMPLE:

BEFORE SAMPLING:

- a) Obtain an outbreak number from TPH investigator.
- b) Check expiry date on the side of the specimen bottles to ensure that they have not expired.
- c) Label **each** specimen bottle with the resident/patient information: last and first name, date of birth (DOB), date specimen collected and outbreak number. Specimens without a resident/patient name and DOB will **not** be processed.
- d) Complete the requisition form with resident/patient Health card number, sex, DOB, last and first name, address, date of collection, onset date: If not already completed by your TPH investigator, complete the following sections: **Test(s) Requested** = Enteric outbreak organisms; **Specimen Type and Site** = Faeces; **Reason for Test** = Other, Specify, Enteric outbreak; **Public Health Investigator Information** = Your TPH investigator name, phone and fax numbers; **Patient Setting** = Institution, **Clinical Information** = Gastroenteritis.

SAMPLING:

- a) Perform hand hygiene.
- b) *Put on gown and gloves, and eye protection/face shield and surgical mask if there is an anticipated risk of splashes to the face.
- c) Collect the sample in a clean container. Samples that have been in contact with water in toilet are not acceptable (for infants/elderly, collect from soiled diaper or directly from potty).
- d) Using the spatula on the lid of each bottle, add stool (faeces) up to the line indicated on the side of the container, preferably from different sites of the sample e.g. blood, mucous or pus sites. Replace and tighten the cap. Specimen will **not** be processed if there has been leakage during transit.
- e) Place the bottles into the plastic bag and place the requisition form into the pouch located at the front of the plastic bag (do not place the requisition form inside the bag with the specimen containers). Seal (close) the part of the bag that has the specimen containers in it by peeling off the adhesive strip.
- f) Remove gloves then gown. Discard PPE into appropriate container. Perform hand hygiene.
- g) Remove eye protection then mask. Discard PPE into appropriate container. Perform hand hygiene.
- h) Refrigerate the specimen immediately after collection (**Do Not Freeze**).
- i) Call your TPH investigator to arrange pick-up of specimens, if after regular business hours, call 3-1-1. Specimens should arrive at PHL as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after collection.

**Use of PPE: Refer to PIDAC Routine Practices and Additional Precautions in All Health Care Settings, November 2012.*

For more information on enteric outbreak specimen collection refer to

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/ServicesAndTools/LaboratoryServices/Pages/Index.aspx>