

COLLECTION OF STOOL SPECIMENS

Collection containers may be obtained from the laboratory. Specimens for ova and parasite testing should be brought to the laboratory within two (2) hours of collection, or collected in special containers with proper preservatives. Urine and water destroy parasites and may give false results to culture and occult blood test. Do not obtain a specimen from the results of tap water, soap suds, or barium enema. A phosphate enema (Fleets) may be used to obtain a stool specimen.

A. Stool Specimen for Culture, Wright Stain or Fat

1. Equipment: Bedpan or "hat" specimen collector, specimen container and tongue blade.
2. Procedure:
 - a. Instruct patient about the need for specimen and need to use bedpan or "hat" collector. Remind patient not to mix urine with stool specimen.
 - b. Select portion of stool which contains mucus, pus or any stool which is unformed or less formed than the rest. No barium.
 - c. Place portion of stool (size of walnut) in container.
 - d. Label container with patient's name, date, and time of collection. Place container in zip-top bag.
 - e. Send specimen with requisition to lab as soon as possible.
3. Only collect one specimen per 24 hours.

B. Stool Specimen for Ova and Parasites examination and Rapid Giardia Assay

1. Equipment: Bedpan or "hat" specimen collector, tongue blade. In-patients may use regular 4 oz specimen container. Outpatients should use containers available from the laboratory with preservatives.
2. Procedure:
 - a. Instruct patient about the need for specimen and need to use bedpan or "hat" collector. Remind person not to mix urine with stool specimen.

- b. Observe stool. Choose for specimen any stool which may be less formed or contains mucus. Do not use any stools that contain barium.
- c. Place a portion (size of a walnut) of the specimen in container (quality of specimen, not quantity, is important).
- d. Label container with patient's name, date and time of collection, and transport in zip-top bag to laboratory with requisition.
- e. Unpreserved specimens must be received in laboratory within two hours of collection.
- f. If more than one specimen is ordered, send only one specimen per 24 hour period.
- g. Recommended collection for ova and parasite is 3 stool specimens.
Collected 1 specimen a day for 3 consecutive days.
- h. Rapid Giardia assay should be performed within 48 hours of collection. If this is not possible, add 10% formalin and specimen is stable for 2 months.

C. Stool for Occult Blood

1. Patient Preparation:

- The patient should be placed on a meat-free, high bulk diet one or two days prior to testing and continuing through the test period. All blood-containing foods, such as meats and meat extracts, should be avoided as should turnips, horseradish, and other foods rich in peroxidase-like substances. Medications such as aspirin, phenylbutazone, iron preparations and others may cause false positive reactions, and large doses of Vitamin C may cause false negatives. These should be discontinued one to two days before testing and during testing. At least three consecutive stools should be tested to increase the probability of detecting occult blood. Patients with bleeding hemorrhoids or menses should not be tested.

2. Equipment: Bedpan or "hat" specimen collector, specimen container or hemocult slide and tongue blade.

3. Procedure - Collection:

- a. Instruct patient about the need for specimen and about need to use bedpan or "hat" collector. Remind patient not to mix urine with stool specimen.

- b. Observe stool. Choose for specimen any stool which is less formed or contains any obvious blood.
- c. Place specimen in collection container.
- d. Label specimen container with name and date and time of collection.

Deliver specimen and requisition to laboratory.

- e. If more than one specimen is ordered, there are no restrictions on how many specimens may be obtained in the 24hour period.

D. Clostridium difficile

1. Equipment: Bedpan or "hat" specimen collector, specimen containers and tongue blade.

2. Procedure:

- a. Instruct patient about need for specimen and use of bedpan or "hat" collector. Remind patient not to mix urine with stool specimen.
- b. Using the tongue blade transfer a portion (about the size of a walnut or if liquid about 10ml) of stool into a clean dry container.
- c. Label specimen container with patient name, date and time of collection.

Place specimen container in zip-top bag with completed requisition on outside of bag and send to laboratory.

- d. Freshly collected stool specimens are preferred. Specimens not brought to laboratory right away must be refrigerated. DO NOT FREEZE.