

Central Vermont Medical Center

Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine

STOOL COLLECTION

To collect a stool specimen, a well scoured bedpan is convenient or a well-cleansed and boiled glass container is sufficient. In the outpatient setting, a urine hat or plastic wrap draped over the toilet is useful.

Patients should be warned against passing urine at the same time into the container.

A tongue depressor is a convenient instrument for transferring the stool from bedpan to a transport vessel.

SPECIMEN CONTAINER

Specimens are placed in either a clean container or Protocol C & S stool transport media. See individual tests for specific instructions.

SPECIMEN COLLECTION REQUIREMENTS

******* LABEL ALL SPECIMENS CLEARLY WITH PATIENT NAME, DATE OF BIRTH, AND COLLECTION DATE AND TIME.**

1. Parasite screen:
 - a. Fresh specimens are placed in a clean container and kept refrigerated until testing can be performed. Fresh specimens must be delivered to the lab within one hour of collection.
 - b. Specimens unable to be received in the lab within one hour of collection must be placed in Protocol C & S stool transport media. Specimens may be stored at room temperature for up to 72 hours.
2. Ova and Parasite Exam: Approximately 2-5 g of fresh specimen is to be placed in a clean container. Deliver to laboratory as soon as possible. Keep refrigerated. If there is a delay in delivery, an aliquot of stool should be added to formalin to preserve the specimen. No more than 3 specimens in a 72 hour time frame.
3. Vibrio isolation: Transfer an aliquot of stool into a #1 VDH stool container containing Cary-Blair media within one hour of defecation. Complete the associated paperwork for VDH. Keep media refrigerated. Courier will deliver media refrigerated to the State Lab. The rest of the routine stool culture will be processed here at CVH, in the microbiology laboratory.

4. Clostridium difficile toxin / antigen: One mL of liquid or soft stool is needed in a clean container, sent to laboratory ASAP. Specimen must take the shape of the container. Preserved samples are NOT accepted.
5. Routine stool culture for enteric pathogens: Includes Salmonella spp., Shigella spp., Campylobacter spp., Yersinia spp., Aeromonas spp. and E.coli EHEC (Enterohemorrhagic E. coli).
 - a. Fresh specimens are placed in a clean container and kept refrigerated until testing can be performed. Fresh specimens must be delivered to the lab within one hour of collection.
 - b. Specimens unable to be received in the lab within one hour of collection must be placed in Protocol C & S stool transport media. Specimens may be stored at room temperature for up to 72 hours.
 - c. The lab will not process stool cultures on patients that have been in-house for greater than 72 hours.
6. Rotavirus antigen: Place sample in clean wide mouth container and refrigerate ASAP. If testing is not to be performed within 72 hours, freeze sample until test date.
7. H. pylori antigen: Place sample in clean container and refrigerate. If testing is not to be performed within 72 hours, freeze sample until test date. Antimicrobials, proton pump inhibitors and bismuth preparations are known to suppress H. pylori, and ingestion of these prior to H. pylori testing may cause false negative results. It is recommended that treatment with these agents be discontinued for two weeks prior to testing.

REFERENCE

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3. Willey S. and Bartlett, J.G. Cultures for Clostridium Difficile in Stools Containing a Cytotoxin Neutralized by Clostridium Sordellii Antitoxin. Journal of Clinical Microbiology, 10: 880-884 1979
4. Garcia,Lynne S., Bruckner David A.; Diagnostic Medical Parasitology; Third Edition; 1997
5. Bailey and Scott's Diagnostic Microbiology, Ninth Edition, 1994
6. Vermont Department of Health Laboratory, Burlington Vermont