



**NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S**  
*When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.*

**Helping Hand™**

*Health Education for Patients and Families*

## Stool Collection Guidelines

Your child's poop (stool) must be tested so we can plan treatment for them. You will collect some stool (a specimen) at home, then bring it to a Nationwide Children's Hospital Laboratory Service Center.

### You Will Need

- The right container(s) for the test(s) ordered (examples shown in Picture 1). Not all tests use the same containers.
- A tongue depressor or plastic spoon
- For an older child, a toilet hat (Picture 2) or plastic wrap
- A label to put on the container
- Disposable exam gloves (optional)



**Picture 1** You will bring the stool in a container like these to the lab with the label completely filled out.

### Label the Specimen

1. Child's full legal name – full first and last names, correctly spelled
2. **One** of the following unique identifiers:
  - Date of birth **or**
  - Patient's ID number **or**
  - Nationwide Children's Hospital medical record number

**Do steps 1 and 2 before starting the collection.**

3. Date of stool collection (MM/DD/YYYY) – write this **after** the collection.
4. Time of stool collection (include a.m. or p.m.) – write this **after** the collection.

Nationwide Children's clinics may give you an EPIC registration label to put on the container(s).



**Picture 2** A toilet hat can help to collect an older child's stool specimen.

## Collect the Specimen

Collect the specimen even if your child has loose, runny stools or diarrhea.

Wash your hands before and after handling your child's stool. Stool can contain germs that spread infection. Disposable exam gloves may be used, if desired.

### For the test to be accurate:

- There should be no creams or ointments on your child's bottom. However, if your child has a diaper rash, it is OK to use cornstarch, petroleum jelly (Vaseline<sup>®</sup>), or Resinol<sup>®</sup>. These products will not affect the test.
- The stool must not mix with urine.
- **Do not collect the stool from the toilet.**

### Infants

Take the stool out of the diaper. If your child has loose or runny stools, put the plastic side of the diaper next to the skin. Leave the diaper on this way just long enough to collect enough stool.

### Toddlers

If your toddler is toilet trained, you can use a clean, dry training potty, training pants, or diaper to collect some stool.

### Older Children

- Use a clean, dry toilet hat to collect stools (Picture 2, page 1). Place the toilet hat on the back rim of the toilet bowl, just under the toilet seat.
- If using plastic wrap, loosely drape a long section of plastic wrap over the rim on both sides of the toilet bowl. The stool can drop onto the dip in the plastic.

## Prepare the Specimen

1. **Before you put stool into the specimen container, see pages 4 and 5 to know the exact amount, timing, and other special instructions for the type of test.**
2. Check the label to be sure that it has your child's full legal name, and date of birth, patient ID number, or medical record number. Then, write the date and time of the collection. Please note, the specimen will not be tested if the patient's name and at least one other patient identifier are not on the label.
3. Use a wooden tongue depressor (Picture 3) or a plastic spoon to place the right amount of stool into the specimen container for the test ordered.



**Picture 3** Each test has special instructions. Before you put stool into a specimen container, see pages 4 and 5.

4. Secure the lid on the container(s), then place the container(s) in a resealable bag.
5. Throw the tongue depressor or plastic spoon away.
6. Bring the stool specimen to a Laboratory Service Center as soon as possible. If you cannot bring it right away, some specimens may need to be refrigerated or frozen.

**If you are collecting specimens for more than one child:**

- Wash your hands before getting stools from each child.
- Make sure the label on each specimen container is filled out completely.
- Put all of each child's specimens in a separate resealable bag.

**Drop-off Options**

For business hours and locations, please call Laboratory Services at (800) 934-6575 or visit [NationwideChildrens.org/Lab](https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/Lab).

During the day, drop the specimen off at:

- Any Laboratory Service Center or Nationwide Children's *Close To Home*™ Center.
- Nationwide Children's Orange Laboratory located at 555 S. 18<sup>th</sup> Street, Columbus, Ohio 43205.











In the evening:

- Nationwide Children's Hospital Admitting Department on main campus.










**Please do not drop off stool specimens at the Emergency Department.**

For questions, call Laboratory Services at (800) 934-6575 or your health care provider.

# STOOL COLLECTION CHART

TEST NAME	COLLECTION CONTAINER	CONTAINER PICTURE	COLLECTION INSTRUCTIONS	STABILITY *Includes transport and testing time
Adenovirus 40/41 Antigen, Stool	Sterile Container (blue cap)		Use a tongue depressor or spoon (not a swab) to collect at least ½ teaspoon of stool to put in the sterile container.	Refrigerated - 72 hours Frozen - 1 month
Alpha 1 Antitrypsin Quantitative, Stool	Sterile Container (blue cap)		Use a tongue depressor or spoon (not a swab) to collect at least 1 tablespoon of stool to put in the sterile container.	Room temperature - 24 hours Refrigerated - 7 days Frozen - 3 months
Calprotectin, Stool	Sterile Container (blue cap)		Use a tongue depressor or spoon (not a swab) to collect at least 1 tablespoon of stool to put in the sterile container. When collecting from a diaper, <b>do not</b> take stool that touches the diaper lining.	Room temperature - 4 days Refrigerated - 10 days Frozen - indefinite
Clostridium difficile Toxin Gene	Sterile Container (blue cap)		Use a tongue depressor or spoon (not a swab) to collect at least 1 tablespoon of stool or at least ½ teaspoon of loose or liquid stool to put in the sterile container.	Room temperature - 24 hours Refrigerated - 5 days Frozen - no time limit
Culture, Stool	Cary Blair (green capped container with red liquid)		Use the collection spork (attached to the cap) or a tongue depressor to collect stool. Put enough in the container until the liquid reaches the red line on the label. Screw the cap tightly and turn upside down several times until <b>completely mixed</b> .	Stool <b>must</b> be put in the container within 2 hours of collection.  Room temperature - 24 hours Refrigerated - 72 hours.
	Dual Culture Swab		Push both swabs a little past the butt opening (anal sphincter) to collect the stool. Put the swabs into the plastic tube. The swab tips <b>must</b> touch the wet sponge at the end of the tube.	Room temperature - 24 hours Refrigerated - 24 hours
Fecal Fat, Qualitative	Sterile Container (blue cap)		Use a tongue depressor or spoon (not a swab) to collect at least 1 tablespoon of stool to put in the sterile container.	Refrigerated - 2 weeks Frozen - 2 weeks
Gastrointestinal (GI) Infection Array	Cary Blair (green capped container with red liquid)		Use the collection spork (attached to the cap) or tongue depressor to collect stool. Put enough in the container until the liquid reaches the red line on the label. Screw the cap tightly and turn upside down several times until <b>completely mixed</b> .	Stool <b>must</b> be put in the container within 2 hours of collection.  Room temperature - 24 hours Refrigerated - 72 hours
Giardia/ Cryptosporidium Antigen, Stool	Total-Fix (white capped container) or Cary Blair (green capped container with red liquid)	 	Use the collection spork (attached to the cap) or a new tongue depressor to collect stool for each test. Try to get stool from places that have blood or a lot of mucus. Put enough stool in the container until the liquid reaches the colored line on the label. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The container with the white cap has a black line.</li> <li>The green-capped container has a red line.</li> </ul> Screw the cap tightly and turn upside down several times until <b>completely mixed</b> .	Stool <b>must</b> be put in the container within 2 hours of collection.  Total-Fix container (white cap) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Room temperature - 2 months</li> <li>Refrigerated - 2 months</li> </ul> Cary Blair container (green cap) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refrigerated – 2 weeks</li> </ul>

# STOOL COLLECTION CHART

TEST NAME	COLLECTION CONTAINER	CONTAINER PICTURE	COLLECTION INSTRUCTIONS	STABILITY *Includes transport and testing time
Gram Stain (Stool WBC)	Dual Culture Swab		Push both swabs a little past the butt opening (anal sphincter) to collect the stool. Put the swabs into the plastic tube. The swab tips <b>must</b> touch the wet sponge at the end of the tube.	Room temperature - 24 hours
Occult Blood, Stool	Sterile Container (blue cap)		Use a tongue depressor or spoon (not a swab) to collect at least 1 teaspoon of stool to put in the sterile container.	Refrigerated - 8 hours
	Hemoccult Card		The laboratory or your child's health provider will give you a Hemoccult card and a wooden stick to test for blood in the stool. Use the stick to collect the stool from <b>2 different places</b> . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Put a thin smear (match head-sized sample) of stool inside box A's square.</li> <li>Put a thin smear of stool from a 2nd place in box B's square.</li> </ul> Close the card's lid.	Room temperature - 14 days
Helicobacter pylori, Antigen Detection, Stool	Sterile Container (blue cap)		Use a tongue depressor or spoon (not a swab) to collect at least ½ teaspoon of stool to put in the sterile container. <b>Do not</b> collect stool that has mixed with urine.	Refrigerated - 72 hours Frozen – no time limit
Ova & Parasite Examination (O&P)	Total-Fix (white capped vial)		Use the collection spork (attached to the cap) or a new tongue depressor to collect stool for each test. Try to get stool from places that have blood or a lot of mucus. Put enough stool in the container until the liquid reaches the black line on the label. Screw the cap tightly and turn upside down several times until <b>completely mixed</b> .	Stool <b>must</b> be put in the container within 2 hours of collection.  Room temperature - 14 days Refrigerated - 14 days
Pancreatic Elastase (E1), Stool	Sterile Container (blue cap)		Use a tongue depressor or spoon (not a swab) to collect at least 1 teaspoon of stool to put in the sterile container. <b>Do not</b> collect stool that has mixed with urine.	<b>Do not</b> store at room temperature Refrigerated – 2 weeks Frozen – 30 days
pH, Stool	Sterile Container (blue cap)		Use a tongue depressor or spoon (not a swab) to collect at least ½ teaspoon of loose or liquid stool to put in the sterile container. <b>Do not</b> collect stool that has mixed with urine.	Frozen - 24 hours
Reducing Substances, Fecal	Sterile Container (blue cap)		Use a tongue depressor or spoon (not a swab) to collect at least 1/2 teaspoon of stool to put in the sterile container. <b>Do not</b> collect stool that has mixed with urine.	<b>Do not</b> store at room temperature Refrigerated – 1 week Frozen – 2 weeks
Rotavirus Antigen, Stool	Sterile Container (blue cap)		Use a tongue depressor or spoon (not a swab) to collect at least 1 teaspoon of loose or liquid stool to put in the sterile container. <b>Do not</b> collect stool that has mixed with urine.	Refrigerated - 72 hours Frozen – no time limit