

Collect Stool Specimens At Home Instructions

No special preparation is required before collecting a stool specimen (sample). You should be given a sterile cup to collect the specimen at home.

Collect the specimen as follows:

- Urinate before collecting the stool so that you do not get any urine in the stool sample. Do not urinate while passing the stool.
- Stool can contain material that spreads infection, so wash your hands before and after you collect the specimen.
- Pass stool (but no urine) into a sterile cup. You may also tape cling or plastic wrap across the toilet to catch the stool, please see picture below.
- Either solid or liquid stool can be collected.
- If you have diarrhea, a plastic bag taped to the toilet seat may make the collection process easier; the bag is then placed in a sterile cup.
- Do not collect the sample from the toilet bowl.
- Do not mix toilet paper, water, or soap with the sample.
- Place the lid on the container and label it with your name and the date the stool was collected.
- Deliver your stool specimen the same day you collect it to your county health department.

Reasons why the results may not be helpful include:

- Recent use of antibiotics, medicine (such as bismuth) to control diarrhea, enemas, or laxatives.
- Recent X-ray tests using a contrast material containing barium.
- A stool sample that is mixed with urine or blood.
- Not collecting a large enough sample.
- Not getting the stool sample to the lab for testing quickly enough.

