

Stool Sample Collection: Patient Instructions

Your doctor, nurse or healthcare professional has asked you to provide a stool (faeces/poo) sample. Stool testing can help identify infections, inflammation, blood in the bowel and other conditions affecting the digestive system.

Before you start

You will need:

- A stool specimen container provided by your healthcare professional.
- A specimen bag (if supplied).
- A clean container, cling film, or other method to catch the stool before it enters the toilet water.

Before collecting the sample:

- Label the specimen container with your full name, date of birth, and the date the sample was collected.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water.
- If you need to pass urine, do so before collecting the stool sample.

How to collect a stool sample

1. Place something clean in the toilet to catch the stool.
2. Pass the stool, ensuring it does not touch the toilet bowl or toilet water.
3. Using the spoon attached to the specimen container, or a disposable spoon, transfer a small amount of stool into the sample container.
4. Include any areas that contain blood, mucus (slime) or loose/watery stool if present.
5. Fill the container to approximately one-third to one-half full.
6. Secure the lid tightly.
7. Dispose of any collection materials in a plastic bag and place them in household waste.
8. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.

Storing the sample

- Return the sample as soon as possible after collection.
- If you cannot return the sample immediately, keep it in a refrigerator inside a sealed plastic bag.
- Contact your healthcare provider if the sample cannot be delivered within 24 hours.

Returning the sample

- Return the sample to your GP surgery, clinic or laboratory as instructed.
- Samples should be delivered as soon as possible after collection.

Important points

- Prevent the sample from coming into contact with toilet water or urine.
- Use only the specimen container supplied for the test.
- Ensure the container is clearly labelled before returning it.
- Follow any additional instructions provided by your healthcare professional.