

SPECIMEN COLLECTION INSTRUCTIONS

ENTERIC BACTERIOLOGY

These laboratory instructions provide guidance on how to properly collect stool specimens and how to successfully ensure safe transport to the laboratory. It is critical that specimens be collected properly, labeled properly, stored appropriately, and submitted with a complete laboratory test request/submission form for enteric bacteriology testing.

WHAT IS COLLECTED: The preferred specimen for enteric bacteriology is loose or semi-solid stool. OLS will also accept bloody and watery stool. Formed or hard stool specimens are not optimal, but will be accepted.

TIMING OF COLLECTION: Specimens for testing should only be collected from individuals who have been symptomatic for less than 72 hours and have not been placed on antimicrobial therapy. Patients who have received antimicrobial agents should wait one week after last dose to collect.

HOW TO COLLECT: Once collected, the stool should be placed in Cary Blair as soon as possible (within two hours of collection). Make sure the lid is securely closed. It is recommended to use Parafilm or tape to seal the lid. Cary Blair is a red liquid. Do not remove the liquid inside the collection vial. Raw stool not in transport media will result in rejection of the specimen.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE): Disposable gloves are recommended when collecting stool specimens. When collection is complete, dispose of all PPE and other contaminated materials in a trash receptacle. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand gel before and after the collection procedure.

STEPS TO STOOL SPECIMEN COLLECTION:

1. Label the Cary Blair vial with the patient's first and last name (or unique identifier) and the date of collection.
2. Obtain clean newspaper, plastic wrap (as shown below) or wide-mouthed container. Collect the stool specimen as shown below.



- A. Lift the toilet seat. Cover the toilet bowl with a large sheet of newspaper or plastic wrap. Make a depression in the material with your hand to allow for collection. (If using wide-mouthed container, hold so that stool goes directly into container and does not come into contact with water or urine.)
- B. Lower the toilet seat and sit to pass specimen onto newspaper or plastic wrap.

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3. An appropriate (i.e. bloody, slimy, watery) area of stool should be selected and sampled with the collection spoon provided in the cap of the container. Sufficient stool is added to the container to bring the liquid level up to the “fill to here” line (approximately 1 gram). **DO NOT REMOVE THE LIQUID INSIDE THE COLLECTION VIAL.**
4. **DO NOT TAKE STOOL FROM TOILET BOWL.** Stool samples cannot be tested if mixed with water or urine.
5. After collecting stool specimen, dispose of newspaper or plastic wrap.
6. Agitate each specimen with the spoon along the sides of the container, tighten the cap. Gently invert vial to insure that the specimen is adequately mixed.

COMPLETION OF TEST REQUEST FORM: The test request form must contain the patient name (and/or unique identifier), patient date of birth, date of specimen collection, source of specimen, and submitting facility name and address at a minimum. The specimen vial must have the patient name or unique identifier that matches the test request form. Place the completed form in the outside pouch of the biohazard bag so that it does not come into contact with specimens. **FAILURE TO COMPLETE THE REQUIRED INFORMATION ON THE TEST REQUEST FORM MAY RESULT IN THE REJECTION OF THE SAMPLE.**

STORAGE: After collection, place the vial containing the specimen into a zippered or sealable biohazard labeled bag. It is best to keep the specimen(s) refrigerated at 4°C (39°F) until shipping. If refrigeration is not available, specimen(s) can be stored at room temperature (19-25°C [66-77°F]).

PACKAGING AND SHIPPING: Specimens can be shipped at ambient temperature and do not require ice packs. **DO NOT SHIP SPECIMENS IF THEY WILL ARRIVE AT OLS DURING WEEKENDS OR HOLIDAYS.** OLS does not have the means to accept any packages during weekends or holidays. The package must be shipped according to the current DOT, IATA, and ICAO regulations. See our website - www.dhr.wv.gov/ols - for complete packaging and shipping guidelines.

CONTACTS

For collection, shipping, or laboratory testing questions, contact the OLS Microbiology Section at 304-558-3530 extension 2602.

NOTE: *Routine enteric bacteriology includes isolation of Salmonella spp., Shigella spp., Campylobacter jejuni, and/or Shiga-toxin producing Escherichia coli (including O157). Other testing available upon special request.*