
STOOL SAMPLE COLLECTION AT HOME

TESTING FOR BACTERIA AND VIRUSES

Why do I need a stool sample test?

The easiest way to find out the cause of your diarrhea is to test your stool for microorganisms such as bacteria and viruses.

York Region Public Health provides kits for collection and laboratory testing of your stool.

When should I use the kit?

Collect stool sample as early as possible following the onset of symptoms, ideally within the first 48 hours after onset.

Preparing to collect the stool sample

Gather the following items:

- Disposable plastic gloves
- *Enteric outbreak kit*
- Brown bag

Check the expiry date before using the kit. The lab will not process samples collected with expired kits.

For children in diapers: line the inside of the diaper with plastic wrap, to prevent the microorganisms in the stool from being absorbed into the diaper.

For older children and adults: put plastic wrap loosely to form a “dip” or place a clean collection container (pot, bedpan, etc.) under the toilet seat to catch the stool. Faeces specimens that have been in contact with water in toilet are unacceptable. Also, if possible, do not allow stool to mix with urine.

The *Enteric Outbreak Kit* includes two bottles with a tiny spoon attached inside each cap:

- The **green-capped bottle** (used for testing bacteria) has a red-colored liquid in it. This is a preservative. The liquid protects the bacteria so the lab can detect them. Please do not pour it out and DO NOT DRINK the liquid in the bottle. This liquid is poisonous for humans. Keep it out of children’s reach.
- The **white-capped bottle** (used for testing viruses) is a sterile and empty bottle with no preservative in it.

How do I use the kit?

1. Remove the bottle from the biohazard plastic bag.
2. Print the following information on the bottle using a ballpoint pen:
 - Your full name (first name and last name), AND
 - Date the stool sample was placed into the bottle (date collected), AND
 - Date of birth OR health card number

Note: The test will not be done by the laboratory on bottles with missing information.
3. Deposit stool sample into the plastic wrap or a clean collection pan.
4. Put on disposable plastic gloves.
5. Collect stool in both bottles. If you can only collect one sample (if there is not enough stool), start with the white-cap bottle.
6. Use the tiny spoon from inside the bottles to add stool to the line indicated. Do not overfill. Select different sites of the stool. Select different sites of the stool for each bottle. Include blood, mucus or pus in the sample if present. When using the green bottle, mix the stool into the liquid. Place the cap on the bottle and make sure the lid is closed tightly.
7. Complete the fields of the Public Health Ontario *General Test Requisition* form as instructed by York Region Public Health. Include the patient's first and last name, date of birth, health card number, date collected, date of onset of symptoms, address, postal code and phone number.
8. The information from the test requisition form must match the information printed on the bottle.
9. Place the bottle into the longer pocket of the plastic bag.
10. Seal the plastic bag by peeling off the liner (to expose the adhesive), fold the bag over and press to close.
11. Place the completed test requisition form in the pocket on the outside of the sealed plastic bag.
12. Place the plastic bag in the brown paper bag.
13. After collection REFRIGERATE the sample immediately. DO NOT FREEZE.
14. Call York Region Public Health right away to let them know that your sample is ready to be picked up.
15. York Region Public Health will arrange with you to pick up the samples from your home and deliver them to the laboratory.

When will I get my results?

It typically takes a few days for the lab to report the results to York Region Public Health. We will call you when we receive your results.