

Collecting a stool specimen for microbiological examination

1. Do not mix urine with the stool specimen. If you need to pass water, do so first.
2. Place a wide-mouth container (potty, empty plastic food container eg 1 litre ice cream carton) in the bowl, or put clean newspaper or plastic wrap over the toilet seat opening (this prevents the faecal/stool specimen from falling into the toilet bowl). The collection container does not have to be sterile, but must be clean.
3. Pass stool onto the potty, plastic container, newspaper or plastic wrap.
4. Using the spoon built into the lid of the collection tube (or the wooden sticks, if supplied), place small scoopfuls of stool from areas which appear bloody, slimy or watery into the tube. Do not overfill. Try not to spill stool on the outside of the tube.
5. Replace the collection tube lid and screw on tightly.
6. Dispose of remaining stool in your potty, plastic container or newspaper down the toilet. Clean potty with hot soapy water. Wrap plastic container, newspaper or plastic wrap in newspaper and dispose of in normal refuse in a plastic bag.
7. Label the collection tube with your name, date of birth and the date of collection.
8. Place the container in the plastic bag attached to the completed specimen request form.
9. Wash your hands thoroughly in hot running water with soap.
10. Specimen should be delivered to the surgery or laboratory as soon as possible.