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Centre intégré  
de santé  
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du Bas-Saint-Laurent

Québec 

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# User Instructions

## Stool Culture

Clinical Department of Laboratory Medicine

OPTI-DE-002



Your doctor has prescribed a **stool culture** to see if you have a bacterial infection.

Stool cultures are used to identify the bacteria responsible for persistent diarrhea, stomach pain, nausea, vomiting lasting several days and fever.

This brochure explains the steps to follow.

### MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Cary Blair medium for transporting stool specimens
- For sampling, a clean container or plastic wrap (e.g., Saran Wrap)
- Wooden sticks (one per container)


• **WARNING:** The liquid in the container is toxic. Keep out of reach of children. Avoid contact with skin and mucous membranes.

• **Note:** The colour of the container/cap is for illustrative purposes only and may change without notice.



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## INSTRUCTIONS

- Do not take stool softeners (laxatives/glycerine suppositories), diarrhea medication or antacids in the 24 hours before taking the samples.
-  **However, you should discuss any changes to your medication with your doctor.**
- The stool must not touch your urine, the toilet bowl or the toilet water.
- Patients who wear diapers should collect their stool directly from the diaper.

## SPECIMEN IDENTIFICATION

If not already marked on the container, **clearly** write the following information on the label:

- Your last and first name
- Your personal reference number (medical file number or health insurance number)
- The date and time of sampling

## STORAGE

- Store your samples in a plastic zip-lock bag.
- Keep samples **refrigerated (4°C)** for up to 24 hours. Follow the instructions given by the staff regarding the order in which to return samples if more than one is requested. **Do not freeze.**

## RETURN OF SAMPLES

- Return your specimens to the place you were instructed to return them, i.e., the specimen collection centre at the hospital, the local point of service (LPS) or another location.
- When returning the samples, remember to bring **your hospital card** or RAMQ card as well as **your prescription**, if necessary.

# Sampling method

## STEPS TO FOLLOW

1. Choose the collection method that works for you:
  - A clean plastic container or aluminum plate, or
  - Plastic wrap: Place one or two layers of plastic wrap (e.g., Saran Wrap) under the toilet seat, leaving a dip in the centre.



2. Open the container and lay the cap inside up without touching the inside of the cap.
3. Use the spoon in the cap to collect some stool, if possible with pus, blood or mucus. Keep adding stool until the liquid reaches the black line on the label. **Do not go over the line.** Use a new stick to add stool if necessary.
4. Put the cap back on and close it tightly. Shake to dissolve the stool. If necessary, use the spoon or wooden stick to mix the stool with the liquid.
5. Flush the remaining stool down the toilet and throw out the container or plastic wrap.
6. Wash your hands.

**Important:** If a 2nd or 3rd sample is requested, repeat the procedure with a new sample and container on a different day. Mark the date and time of each sample in the designated area when returning the containers.