

**CENTEGRA CLINICAL LABORATORIES**  
**McHenry/Woodstock, Illinois**

**STOOL COLLECTION & TRANSPORT**

**SPECIMEN CRITERIA:**

1.	If possible, avoid recent antibiotics, or x-ray contrast material, antidiarrheal medications, antacids, bismuth, or oil instillation.
2.	Specimens from a bedpan may be unsatisfactory if there is any residual soap, detergent, or disinfectant left in the pan, or if there is contamination by urine.
3.	Specimens contaminated with toilet paper that has been impregnated with bismuth salts are unacceptable.
4.	Acceptable stool specimens are restricted to outpatients or in-patients hospitalized for $\leq 3$ days. No more than 2 specimens may be tested. Additional specimens will be tested only with prior consultation with a pathologist.
5.	Unpreserved stool specimens must be received in the laboratory within 1-2 hours of collection.
6.	<b>If more than one stool is ordered by the physician, they need to be collected 12-24 hours apart.</b>

**ROUTINE CULTURE:**

1.	The routine bacterial culture includes screening for <i>Salmonella</i> species, <i>Shigella</i> species, <i>Campylobacter</i> species, and Verocytotoxin-producing <i>Escherichia coli</i> (VTEC) O157:H7, sometimes referred to as enterohemorrhagic <i>Escherichia coli</i> (EHEC) and screening for Shiga Toxin.
2.	Organisms sought under special request are <i>Yersinia enterocolitica</i> and <i>Vibrio</i> species.
3.	If <i>Aeromonas</i> spp. or <i>Plesiomonas</i> spp. is recovered, it will be noted on the report.
4.	If a predominant growth of yeast is recovered, it will be noted on the report.

**OVA AND PARASITE EXAM:**

1.	The ova and parasite exam includes examination for intestinal ova and parasites including intestinal coccidia ( <i>Cryptosporidium parvum</i> ).
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**SUPPLIES:**

1.	Clean container with tight leakproof cover. A commode collection container may be used. Available from Distribution.
2.	Culturette or comparable swab transport system for rectal swab collection. Available from the laboratory.
3.	SAF Fixative for Ova and Parasite. Available from the laboratory. Store at room temperature. <b>WARNING! POISON! DO NOT DRINK!</b>
4.	Cary-Blair media for culture. Available from the laboratory.

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**PROCEDURES:**

***STOOL SPECIMEN COLLECTION***

Have the patient obtain a stool specimen by one of the following methods.

1.	Pass stool directly into a clean, widemouth, leakproof container with a tight-fitting lid. A commode collection container may be used.
2.	Pass stool into a clean, dry bedpan, and transfer stool into a sterile leakproof container with a tight-fitting lid.

***RECTAL SWAB COLLECTION***

Rectal swabs should be restricted to patients with active disease, to infants and children from whom feces may be difficult to obtain, and for anal culture for gonorrhea.

1.	Pass the tip of a sterile swab approximately 1 inch beyond the anal sphincter. Carefully rotate the swab to sample the anal crypts, and withdraw the swab. Feces should be seen on the swab.
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***STOOL COLLECTION FOR OVA AND PARASITE EXAM***

The age of the stool specimen submitted for parasitology examination is frequently the most important consideration affecting the diagnosis of infection. Therefore, all stool specimens for ova and parasites should be placed in a fixative so that organisms are not destroyed or distorted before examination.

1.	The stool specimen should be passed into a clean dry container, a bedpan, or other suitable container, which is free of residual detergents and disinfectants. Do not allow urine contamination or toilet water contact with the specimen.
2.	Open the Formalin & PVA vial and use the spoon attached to the lid to transfer the specimen to the vial. Add enough stool specimen to bring the fluid level to the red line. <b>DO NOT overfill.</b>
3.	Mix the stool sample with the fluid in the vial by using the spoon, then tighten the cap and shake the vial.

***STOOL FOR ROUTINE CULTURE AND SHIGA TOXIN***

The age of the stool specimen submitted for culture and Shiga Toxin testing is frequently the most important consideration affecting the diagnosis of infection. Therefore, all stool specimens should be placed in a fixative so that organisms are not compromised.

1.	The stool specimen should be passed into a clean dry container, a bedpan, or other suitable container, which is free of residual detergents and disinfectants. Do not allow urine contamination or toilet water contact with the specimen.
2.	Open the Cary-Blair vial and use the spoon attached to the lid to transfer the specimen to the vial. Add enough stool specimen to bring the fluid level to the red line. <b>DO NOT overfill.</b>
3.	Mix the stool sample with the fluid in the vial by using the spoon, then tighten the cap and shake the vial.
4.	Sample vial's need to be stored <b>refrigerated.</b>

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***STOOL FOR OCCULT BLOOD***

The Occult Blood test is used for the qualitative detection of fecal occult blood. An occult blood test may be performed using one of the following methods.

1.	Obtain a stool specimen as described in <i>STOOL SPECIMEN COLLECTION</i> . Transport to the laboratory.
2.	Obtain a stool specimen as described in <i>STOOL SPECIMEN COLLECITON</i> . Inoculate an occult blood testing card. a. Label the card with the patient’s name, medical record number, and location. b. Collect a small fecal sample on one end of an applicator stick. c. Open front of card and apply a <b>thin smear</b> of stool inside Box A. d. Reuse applicator stick to obtain a second sample from a different part of stool specimen. Apply a <b>thin smear</b> inside Box B. e. Close card. Transport to the laboratory.
3.	Physicians who wish to perform bedside occult blood testing may do so after completing a required competency assessment and color blindness test.

***STOOL FOR MISCELLANEOUS FECAL TESTS***

Refer to section for stool specimen collection.

- Fecal leukocytes (WBC’s)
- Fecal fat
- pH and reducing substances
- Clostridium difficile Toxin A&B
- Rotavirus

***STOOL FOR ACID-FAST BACILLI***

Acid-fast bacilli should be sought only in patients with an established diagnosis of AIDS. Refer to section for stool specimen collection.

**TRANSPORT:**

1.	Maintain the specimen for Ova and Parasite at room temperature and all other tests refrigerated. Transport to the laboratory within 1-2 hours of collection.
2.	If Ova and Parasite exam is ordered and Formalin & PVA fixative is not available, transport to the laboratory within ½ hour.
3.	If Occult Blood cards have been inoculated, transport cards to the laboratory as soon as possible after preparing the last test.