PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

How to Collect a Stool Sample for a Helicobacter pylori Test

This information explains how to collect a stool (poop) sample for a Helicobacter pylori test.

Follow these instructions carefully when you collect your stool sample. This will help make sure the laboratory can test your sample. If they can't test your sample, you'll need to collect a new one.

A member of your care team will give you a stool collection tube and bag.

Instructions

1. Gather your supplies. You'll need:
    - A pen.
    - A stool collection tube. The tube will have liquid inside. It will also have a collection spoon built into the lid (see Figure 1).
    - A biohazard bag.
    - A clean, dry container to catch your stool. If you're in the hospital, a member of your care team will give you a bedpan (see Figure 2). If you're at home, you can use either:
        - A large plastic bag placed in a trash bin.
        - A plastic tub, such as a margarine tub.
        - A wide-mouth jar.
        - A milk carton with the top cut off (see Figure 3).

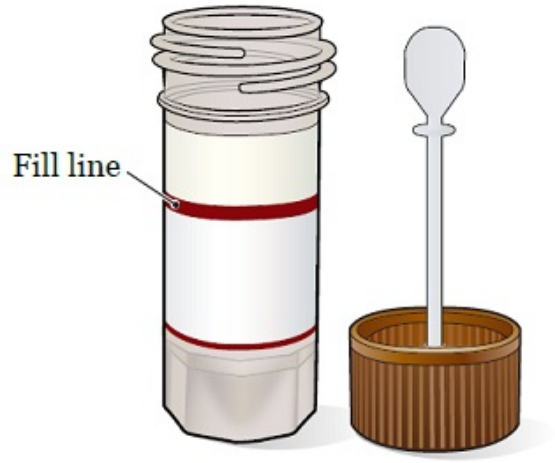


Figure 1. A stool collection tube

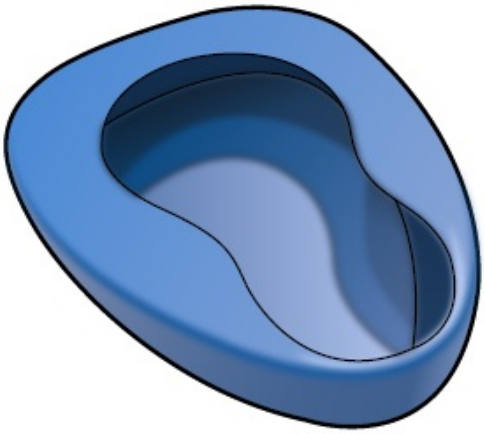


Figure 2. A bedpan



Figure 3. Examples of containers you can use at home

2. Pass your stool into the clean, dry container.
    - Do not pass your stool into the toilet or the collection tube.
    - Do not urinate (pee) on your stool or in the container.
3. Open the collection tube. Using the spoon built into the lid, place small scoops of stool into the tube (see Figure 4). Fill it until the liquid reaches the red line (see Figure 5).
    - If any areas of your stool look bloody, slimy, or watery, take samples from those areas.
    - If your stool is solid, take samples from each end and the middle.



Figure 4. Place small scoops of stool into the tube



Figure 5. Stool and liquid at the red line

4. Use the collection spoon to mix the stool and liquid together (see Figure 6).



Figure 6. Mix the stool and liquid together

5. Twist the cap tightly closed (see Figure 7).



Figure 7. Cap the tube tightly

6. Shake the tube forcefully until the stool and liquid are mixed together (see Figure 8).



Figure 8. Shake the tube well

7. Fill out the label on the tube (see Figure 9).

- Write your full name, the date, and the time.
- If you're at home, write your birth date on the "I.D. Number" line. If you're in the hospital, a member of your care team will write your medical record number (MRN) on this line.
- You do not need to check any boxes in the "Specimen Consistency" area of the label.

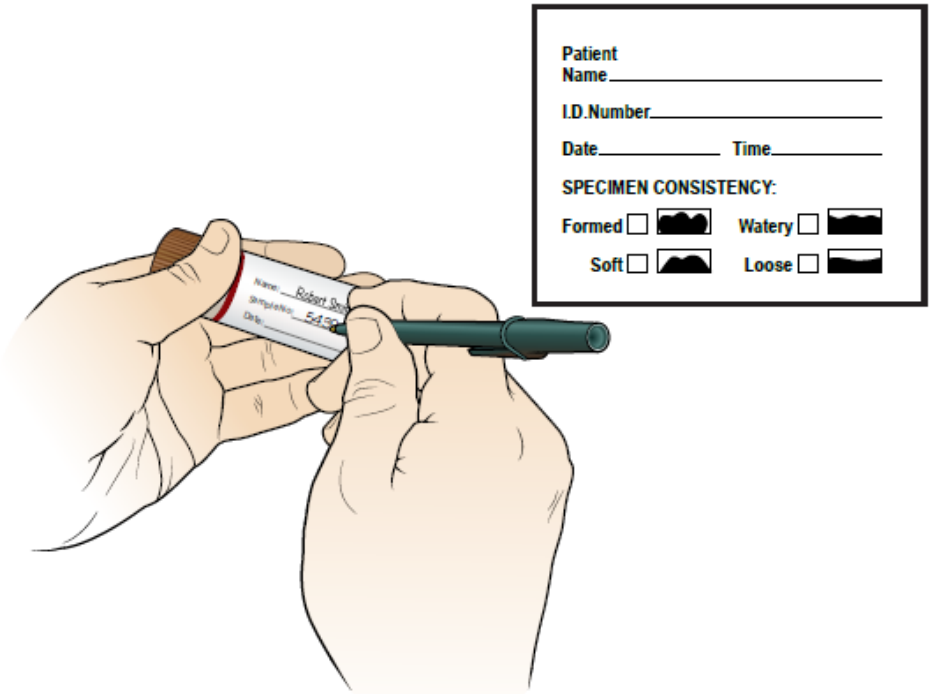


Figure 9. Fill out the label on the tube

8. Put the tube inside the biohazard bag. Seal the bag.

9. Clean your hands well.

- If you're washing your hands with soap and water, wet your hands and apply soap. Rub your hands together for 15 to 20 seconds, then rinse.
- If you're using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, be sure to cover all parts of your hands with it. Rub your hands together until they're dry.

10. Store your sample at room temperature. Bring it to your healthcare provider or laboratory as soon as you can. Do not wait longer than 24 hours (1 day) after you collect the sample. Follow your healthcare provider's instructions for where to bring it.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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