Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

How to Collect a Stool Sample Using a Stool Collection Kit

This information explains how to collect a stool sample using a stool (poop) collection kit.

About your stool collection kit

Your healthcare provider will use this stool collection kit to run laboratory test(s) on your stool (poop). They can use the results to diagnose infection, measure inflammation (swelling), and guide our treatment plan. Your kit should include:

- White stool collection "hat"
- Sterile plastic specimen cups(s)
- Wooden stick (tongue depressor)
- Plastic biohazard bag
- Gloves (optional)

How to collect the sample

1. Wash your hands. Wet your hands and apply soap. Rub your hands together well for at least 20 seconds, then rinse. Dry your hands with a paper towel and use that same towel to turn off the faucet.
2. Gather your supplies. Put them in the bathroom where you can reach them easily.
3. Lift the toilet seat. Place the collection hat on the toilet bowl rim. Close the toilet seat on the collection hat to hold the collection hat in place.
4. Sit on the toilet to have a bowel movement (poop) as usual. **Do not urinate (pee) on your stool or into the collection hat.**
5. Remove the lid from the sterile plastic cup. Using the wooden stick, place 2 to 3 small scoopfuls of stool into the specimen cup. If your kit has more than one cup, put a small amount of stool from the same bowel movement into each cup.
6. Place the lid on the specimen cups tightly. Put in the plastic biohazard bag. Store your stool sample at room temperature (68 °F to 77 °F or 20 °C to 25 °C).
7. Throw away the collection hat and wooden stick.
8. Wash your hands again.

Dropping off your sample

You must bring your sample to an MSK lab within 24 hours (1 day) of collecting the sample. Call the office of the doctor who ordered your stool collection kit when you plan to drop off the sample. If you do not call, the lab will not accept your sample. If you want to bring your sample to a lab closer to your home, talk with your healthcare provider.

Call your healthcare provider if you have any questions or concerns.

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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