



The Collection of a stool (faeces or poo) sample

Information for patients from the Department of Pathology

Your GP or another healthcare professional has asked you to collect a stool (faeces or poo) sample. This leaflet will explain the following.

- Why you have been asked to collect a stool sample.
- What you need to do before you collect your sample.
- How to collect your sample correctly.
- What to do with the sample once you are finished.

We hope this leaflet answers some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a member of your healthcare team.

Why do I have to collect this sample?

The sample will help your doctor diagnose a health condition or rule one out.

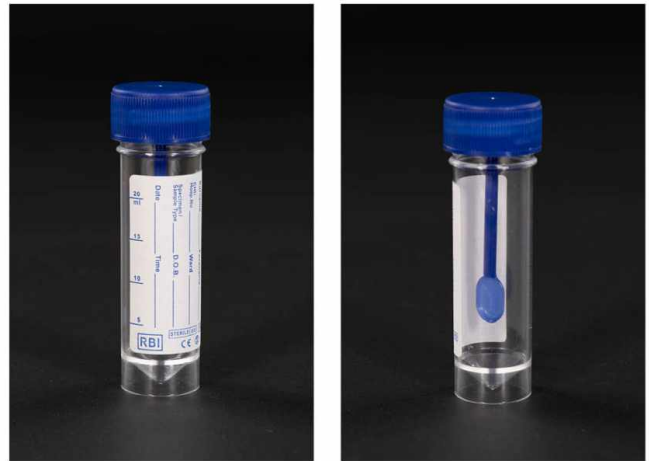
Stools contain bacteria and other substances found in the digestive system. By checking your stools, we can work out whether there are any problems in your digestive system.

What should I do before I collect my sample?

Before collecting your sample, please read and follow all the instructions you have been given.

Your doctor or nurse will give you a sterile blue sample tube. If your doctor or nurse has not already filled in the label, please make sure you complete the label with a biro. Add your:

- first name
- surname, and
- date of birth.
- If you know your NHS number, please also write this on the tube.



Sterile blue sample tube

You will need one of the following:

- a clean dry wide-mouth container (for example an empty plastic food container or a potty).
- some plastic wrap; or
- some clean newspaper.

You will also need a bin bag and soap and water.

How do I collect my sample?

- Place the plastic container or potty in the toilet bowl. Or, place clean newspaper or plastic wrap across the toilet seat opening. If the stool is very watery, you may not be able to use newspaper or plastic wrap.
- Pass the stool into the plastic container, or onto the newspaper or plastic wrap. Make sure the stool does not touch the inside of the toilet.
- Transfer small scoopfuls of the stool into the blue sample tube. Use the spoon built into the lid of the tube.

Try to make sure that any parts of the stool which look bloody, slimy, or watery are put in the sample tube, as well as some solid material. Try not to mix urine (pee) with the stool sample, but don't worry if this is not possible.

- Do not overfill the sample tube. A walnut-sized amount, or a third of the tube is enough for testing.
- Put on the sample tube lid and screw on tightly. If the outside of the tube is dirty, please clean it with soap and warm water.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water, then dry them.
- Flush the leftover stool down the toilet.
 - If you have used newspaper, plastic wrap, or a disposable plastic container, wrap them up in newspaper. Put in a bin bag, tie it up and place it in your outside bin.

- If you have used a potty, clean it with your usual toilet cleaner. Make sure the potty is clean and dry before you use it again.
- Write the date and time on the sample tube. Place the tube in the plastic bag attached to the laboratory request form. Make sure that the bag is properly sealed.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water, then dry them.

What do I do with the sample when I have finished?

- Make sure the lid is done up tightly and the details on the label are filled in.
- As soon as possible, take the sample and the test request form to:
 - your GP surgery; or
 - the Pathology laboratory at your nearest East Kent Hospital.
- If you can't deliver the sample on the same day, keep it somewhere dry and away from heat or direct sunlight. Do not refrigerate.
- Take your samples to Pathology at one of the following hospitals, between 8.30am and 7.30pm Monday to Friday.
 - Kent and Canterbury Hospital, Canterbury.
 - Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital, Margate.
 - William Harvey Hospital, Ashford.

Please follow these instructions carefully. Failure to do so will make it difficult for your doctor to interpret the results. You may have to do the test again.

Who do I tell if I have a problem?

New specimen tubes are available from:

- the Pathology laboratories at each of the hospitals listed above; or
- your GP surgery.

Please discuss any sample collection problems with your healthcare professional.

How will I find out my results?

The laboratory will send the results of your test back to the doctor who requested the test. Most results will be available within 1 to 2 weeks, but some take up to 6 weeks.

Where can I get further information?

- If you have any queries about why this test is being done, please speak to the doctor who requested your test.
- If you have practical questions about your sample collection, please phone the Duty Biochemist on 01233 616287. Laboratory staff cannot discuss your results.

What do you think of this leaflet?

We welcome feedback, whether positive or negative, as it helps us to improve our care and services.

If you would like to give us feedback about this leaflet, please fill in our short online survey. Either scan the QR code below, or use the web link. We do not record your personal information, unless you provide contact details and would like to talk to us some more.

Giving feedback about this leaflet



<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/MDOBU4/>

If you would rather talk to someone instead of filling in a survey, please call the Patient Voice Team.

- **Patient Voice Team**
Telephone: 01227 868605
Email (ekhuft.patientvoice@nhs.net)

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.

Please let us know:

- If you have any accessibility needs; this includes needing a hearing loop or wanting someone to come with you to your appointment.
- If you need an interpreter.
- If you need this information in another format (such as Braille, audio, large print or Easy Read).

You can let us know this by:

- Visiting the Trust web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/ais>).
- Calling the number at the top of your appointment letter.
- Adding this information to the Patient Portal (<https://pp.ekhuft.nhs.uk/login>).
- Telling a member of staff at your next appointment.

Any complaints, comments, concerns or compliments, please speak to a member of your healthcare team. Or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 01227 783145 or email (ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net).

Patients should not bring large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient information leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals' web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patient-information>).

Reference number: Web 287

First published:
June 2015

Last reviewed:
September 2025

Next review date:
January 2029



Illustrations and Photographs created by the Medical Photography Department.

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