

## J-130 Stool Specimen Collection

### Purpose

Obtain specimen for diagnostic purposes.

Assess for bleeding.

Detect presence of parasites.

### Applies To

Registered Nurses

Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurses

Other (*Identify*): \_\_\_\_\_

### Equipment/Supplies

- Waxed cardboard specimen container with lid or sterile test tube with swab.
- Two tongue blades.
- Paper towel.
- Clean or sterile bedpan, commode, specimen hat, or potty chair (for children).
- Disposable gloves.

### Procedure

1. Wash hands. Refer to Hand Washing procedure.
2. Don clean gloves.
3. Bed bound client:
  - a. Assist the client onto the bedpan/commode.
  - b. Instruct the client to void before defecating.
  - c. Urine specimens collected in bedpan or commode should be discarded before defecating. Provide the client with a clean bedpan or commode. *Feces should not be mixed with urine or toilet tissue, which interfere with test results.*
4. Ambulatory client:
  - a. Encourage the client to use the bathroom.
  - b. Instruct the client to void into the toilet before defecating.
  - c. After the client has voided, place clean potty hat on the toilet. *Feces should not be mixed with urine or toilet tissue, which interfere with test results.*
5. Assist the client with washing after toileting and place in comfortable position.

6. Obtain the specimen:
  - a. Culture: Using swab from test tube, gather a bean-sized piece of stool and return swab to tube. If stool is liquid, soak a cotton swab and place it in the tube. *The swab is used to prevent the transfer of bacteria to other objects.*
  - b. Other Stool Tests: Using a tongue blade, transfer approximately 1-inch of formed stool or 15 ml of liquid stool to the appropriate container. *A tongue blade is used to prevent transfer of bacteria to other objects.*
  - c. Timed Stool Specimen: Tests performed require analysis of feces over time. All of each stool is placed in wax cardboard containers for a specified time period, as ordered.
  - d. Cover stool specimen container immediately after use. Store specimen containers in the refrigerator.
7. Wrap used tongue blades in paper towels and discard.
8. Empty and clean bedpan, commode, or specimen hat.
9. Remove gloves and discard equipment as outlined in the Agency Waste Disposal Policy.
10. Wash hands. Refer to Hand Washing procedure.
11. Place labeled specimen in biohazard bag and attach requisition. Deliver to laboratory or place in refrigerator. This provides proper identification to minimize errors. ***When collecting stool for parasites, specimen at body temperature should be examined within 30 minutes.***

**Documentation Guidelines**

Document in the clinical record:

1. Date and time of collection.
2. Appearance of stool.
3. Purpose of stool collection.
4. Time specimen taken to the lab.

**Related Procedures**

None.

**Policy History**

Approval Date	11/1/2009
Approved By	Anne Tyson, Herman Pippin, Sandra Hill
Revision Date	12/31/2009
Approved by	Anne Tyson, Herman Pippin, Sandra Hill
Revision Date	

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