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Laboratory – Stool for C. Difficile Toxin

Description: Your doctor has requested that your stool be analyzed in the Laboratory. The analysis will determine the presence or absence of *Clostridium difficile* (C. difficile) toxin which may be the cause of diarrhea. The reliability of this analysis is dependent on good specimen collection and prompt transport to the laboratory.

What to expect: You may be given a specimen collection container (white plastic over-the-toilet bowl specimen container) and a transport vial (provided by the Laboratory) to take home with you. Please carefully read and follow the collection instructions listed below. If you do not receive collection/transport containers from the Laboratory or your doctor, please follow the “Alternate Method” on the next page. Final results of testing will be available to your physician within two to four days.

Criteria for Specimen Rejection:

- Unlabeled or mislabeled specimen
- Improper specimen storage prior to testing
- Leaking specimen
- **Formed** stool
- Stool contaminated with urine or toilet water
- Testing is limited to one specimen per patient per 7 days; therefore, **duplicate specimens submitted within 7 days are not tested.**

Collection Instructions for Laboratory-provided Collection/Transport System:

1. **IMPORTANT: Please read and follow all directions.**
2. Important Specimen Collection Notes:
 - **DON'T** urinate on the specimen or in the collection container.
 - **DON'T** urinate into the transport vial.
 - **DON'T** pass the specimen directly into the transport tubes.
 - **DON'T** pass the specimen into the toilet bowl.
 - **DO** collect the specimen as follows:
 - a. Pass the stool into the white plastic over-the-toilet bowl specimen collector.
 - b. Open the clean, dry collection vial and transfer stool from the collection container into the transport vial. Using the collection scoop built into the lid of the vial, place at least three scoops of

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stool from areas which appear bloody, slimy or watery into the transport vial.

NOTE: Stool for this test must be a diarrheal stool. Formed stool specimens will be rejected for testing.

- c. Cap the vial and ensure that it is tightly sealed. Leaking specimens will be rejected.
- d. If the specimen cannot be delivered to the Laboratory within 2 hours of collection, maintain the specimen in the refrigerator. If refrigerated the specimen is stable for 5 days.
- e. Label the vial with the patient full name, date of birth, and date and time of collection.
- f. Place the vial in the zip-lock bag, and bring specimen to the Hospital as soon as possible.
- g. Wash your hands thoroughly after specimen collection.

Alternate Method:

1. Stool may be submitted in any container providing it is **CLEAN, DRY** and has a **TIGHT-FITTING LID**.
2. The stool may be passed directly into a clean, dry container such as a clean margarine tub or clean wide-mouthed jar.
3. Or plastic wrap may be placed over the toilet bowl to catch the specimen. Do not allow urine or toilet bowl water to contaminate the specimen. Transfer the specimen to a clean, dry container with a tight-fitting lid for transport to the Hospital.
4. Ensure that the specimen container is tightly sealed.
5. Label the container with patient's full name, date of birth; and the date and time of specimen collection.
6. If the specimen cannot be delivered to the Laboratory within 2 hours of collection, maintain the specimen in the refrigerator. If refrigerated the specimen is stable for 5 days.

Orders for Both Blood Work and Stool Tests:

1. If you come to the Laboratory, and you have orders for both blood and stool tests, your blood will be collected on the day you first present in the Outpatient Lab or Patient Service Center.
2. You will be given the supplies to collect your stool specimen at home, along with instructions. Once you have collected your stool specimen please place the transport vial containing the specimen in the zippered pouch of the bag.

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3. When you return to the Hospital to drop off the specimen, please stop at Central Registration to update your registration. If you return to the Patient Service Center, proceed to the lab reception desk.
4. After registration at the Hospital, proceed to the Outpatient Lab. You will be asked to complete a “drop-off form.”
5. If you have not labeled your specimen, you will be asked to do so at this time. Once all requirements are met, you may turn the specimens over to the person at the Outpatient Lab or Patient Service Center reception desk.

Where to go: Central Registration at Evanston, Glenbrook, Highland Park or Skokie Hospitals or a Patient Service Center. Bring your specimen and additionally, you will be asked to provide a physician order if not already in the electronic health record and billing/insurance information.

Who to call if you have questions: If you have questions or would like additional information, **if you have** please call Microbiology Laboratory at Evanston Hospital at (847) 570-2733.