Collecting urine and stool samples

Clean collection, correct labelling and prompt delivery



Use the container and instructions supplied for your test. Special tests may need a different method.

A midstream urine sample

- Label the container with your full name, date of birth, and collection date and time. Wash your hands. Do not touch the inside of the sterile pot or lid.
- If applicable, hold the labia apart. Begin urinating into the toilet, collect the middle part of the stream without stopping, then finish in the toilet.
- Follow the fill line, especially when there is preservative in the pot. Do not throw away powder or liquid already in the container. Close the lid firmly and wash your hands.

A routine stool sample

- Urinate first if needed. Catch the stool in a clean, dry disposable container; avoid toilet water, urine and cleaning products.
- Use the scoop supplied to transfer the amount requested by the laboratory. Close and label the pot. Wash your hands with soap and water.
- A screening kit, parasite test or other specialised collection may have different instructions. Use its own leaflet rather than this routine method.

Storage and delivery

- Put the closed pot in the specimen bag. Keep the request form separate from the sample. Deliver promptly.
- If there is a delay, ask the clinic about storage and the latest acceptable delivery time for that container and test. Do not assume all samples should be refrigerated.

Ask for separate instructions

First-catch urine, 24-hour urine, catheter samples and samples from babies or children require specific advice. Do not collect urine from a catheter drainage bag yourself.

My sample instructions

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Check that your name and collection time are readable.

Tell the clinic about antibiotics or collection problems; do not delay urgent treatment to obtain a sample.

Test and type of sample

Container / preservative supplied

Collection date and time

Amount or fill line required

Storage instructions if delayed

Where and by when to deliver

Questions or notes for my appointment

Sources and further reading

Healthway: clean-catch urine
https://www.healthwaymalta.com/patient-instructions.php?topic=clean-catch-urine

NHS: collecting a stool sample
https://www.nhs.uk/tests-and-treatments/how-to-collect-a-sample-of-poo-stool-sample/

General information. Follow your individual clinical plan. Sources checked 31 October 2026; review due October 2027.