

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Collection of a faeces (stool) sample

Introduction

Your GP/doctor/nurse has asked you to provide a faeces (stool) sample for testing at the laboratory and should have given you the container pictured below, a request form (if required) and a sample bag. The instructions below tell you how to collect a faeces sample.



If you have not been provided with the container above then you should request one from your GP/doctor/nurse.

Timing of the sample

This sample can be taken any time of the day.

Before you collect the sample

If you need to urinate, do this first, and then collect the faeces sample. Label the container with your name, date of birth and the date and time the sample was produced.

Collecting the faeces sample

Whilst collecting the faeces sample try not to collect urine or water from the toilet with the faeces sample but do not worry if you do.

It is important not to allow any disinfectants to come into contact with the sample as this may affect the results.

1. Place something in the toilet to catch the faeces, such as a potty or an empty plastic food container. Alternatively, you could spread several layers of toilet roll across the toilet bowl securing this by wrapping each end around the toilet seat, or clean newspaper or plastic wrap over the rim of the toilet.
2. Make sure the sample does not touch the inside of the toilet.
3. Use the spoon/spatula that is attached to the lid of the container provided to fill the clean container until it is about a third full (using your own clean container that is about the size of a walnut) and then screw the lid shut leaving the spoon/spatula attached to the lid.
4. Place the labelled container into the sample bag and seal.
5. Dispose of any remaining faeces down the toilet and put anything you used to collect the sample in a plastic bag, tie it up and dispose of this in the bin.
6. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water, rinse and dry.

If your doctor gives you any other instructions, follow these also.

Where do I deliver the sample to?

After collecting the sample, please return it on the same day with the test request form, to either your GP surgery or the Pathology Department at King's Mill Hospital or Newark Hospital.

Please note that samples being tested for **faecal sugar testing MUST be received** by the Pathology Department **within three hours** of the sample being taken.

The Pathology Department at King's Mill Hospital is found by following the signs to the Bereavement Centre and the MRI Scanner. The department's main door is situated on the left near the top of the corridor.

There is a free 15 minute drop off/collection zone outside King's Mill Hospital's main reception and volunteers are available in the entrance foyer to give directions.

The Pathology Department at Newark Hospital is situated on the ground floor next to the Mercia Doughty Preoperative Assessment Unit. When you arrive at Pathology you should take your sample to the delivery hatch at the reception. The staff will check your details and take the sample from you.

You are free to leave once you have handed in your sample as your results will be forwarded to your referring doctor.

Site maps and directions to King's Mill Hospital and Newark Hospital can be found on the Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust website – please see 'Further sources of information'.

How should I store my sample?

The sample should ideally be delivered to your GP or Pathology Department as soon as possible after the sample has been taken.

If you cannot deliver the sample immediately it should be stored in a fridge around 4°C, but for no longer than 24 hours. Your doctor should tell you if you should not fridge the sample. Place the sample in a further plastic bag before putting it in the fridge.

Where is my sample tested?

The sample is processed at the Pathology Department at King's Mill Hospital.

How do I get my results?

Your results will normally be sent back to your referring doctor (GP or consultant) approximately four days after the Pathology Department has received your sample.

Results are not given out by the Pathology Department to patients in order to protect patient confidentiality.

What happens to my sample after it has been tested?

Once your sample has been tested and a result has been sent back to your referring Doctor, the remaining sample is disposed of with the other laboratory waste.

Useful information

Lab Tests Online:

<https://labtestsonline.org.uk/tests/stool-culture>

Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you. External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. If you require a full list of references for this leaflet, please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

To be completed by the Communications office
Leaflet code: PIL202410-06-CFS
Created: August 2017 / Revised: October 2024 /
Review Date: October 2026