

THE VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH LABORATORY

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**INSTRUCTIONS FOR COLLECTION AND PACKAGING OF STOOL SPECIMENS FOR
NOROVIRUS DETECTION**

VDHL KIT # 23

In order to comply with postal regulations and ensure the safety of laboratory personnel and those involved in the transport of specimens, and to maintain integrity of the sample, the VT Department of Health Laboratory will accept for testing only those specimens that are packaged according to the instructions below.

**If you suspect the patient is part of a norovirus outbreak, please notify Vermont
Department of Health Infectious Disease Epidemiology at (802) 863-7240 (available 24/7)**

Kit Contents:

- Labeled plastic vial with spork (spatula attached to cap)
- VDHL Clinical Microbiology Request Form (Micro 220)
- Metal inner container
- Cardboard outer mailing container
- Kit instruction sheet
- White paper toilet “hat” (available upon request)

Specimen Requirements:

Specimen Type: **UNFORMED STOOL** (stool takes the shape of the container with mushy or watery consistency). Visibly formed stool is not consistent with Norovirus gastrointestinal disease and should not be submitted for testing. **Do NOT mix urine with stool.**

Volume Required: 10-30 mL (no more than half full)

Collection Timing: Samples should be collected within the first 48-72 hours after onset of symptoms.

Specimen Collection:

1. **PRINT PATIENT NAME, DATE OF BIRTH, AND DATE OF COLLECTION ON PLASTIC SPECIMEN VIAL.**
2. Infants/Toddlers (not toilet trained) – Collect stool sample from soiled diaper or directly from a child “potty”. Very liquid stool specimens from infants can be prevented from being absorbed into a diaper either by placing a disposable diaper inside out or by placing a layer of plastic wrap inside a clean diaper.
3. Older Children/Adults –Defecate into a clean container. Another method is to place a piece of plastic food wrap (e.g. Saran Wrap) over the toilet and pass the stool onto the plastic. If a paper toilet “hat” was supplied, attach it to the toilet seat by following the instructions printed on the hat, defecate into the hat, then collect the specimen. Transfer stool into the specimen collection container using the spatula attached to the container cap.

NOTE: Stool specimens that have been in contact with toilet water are unacceptable.

4. Carefully screw the cap on the vial and tighten. Place the labeled vial in the provided metal container and screw the cap on tightly.
5. Fill out the VDHL Clinical Microbiology Request Forms (Micro 220).
6. Fold the requisition form and place around the outside of the metal container.
7. Place the requisition form and metal container holding the specimen inside the cardboard mailing container provided and screw the cap on tightly.

Specimen Storage and Shipment:

Storage: Store at 2-8°C following collection

Shipment: Ship at refrigerated temperature (2-8°C). Specimen must arrive at the laboratory within 48 hours of collection.

Specimen Rejection:

- No patient information on the specimen and request form.
- Improper shipment temperature
- Too old to test
- Specimen container overfilled
- Specimen leaked in transit and/or there is insufficient specimen for testing
- Formed stool specimens
- Urine present in stool specimen
- Stool specimens submitted in transport media (e.g. Cary Blair)
- Multiple specimens received from the same patient and/or outbreak which had already tested positive by Real Time RT-PCR