



Stool Sample Information

Why am I being asked to provide a stool sample for my child?

There has been an increase in gastrointestinal illness (ex. nausea, vomiting, diarrhea) in child care and early years settings in Ottawa. Ottawa Public Health is working with service providers to prevent the spread of illness. It is helpful to know which organism (germ) is causing the illness. Collecting stool samples is a good way to know which organism is making people sick.

As COVID-19 is continuing to circulate in the community, it is highly recommended that individuals who are experiencing symptoms complete both a [Rapid Antigen Test](#) and a stool sample. Vomiting, diarrhea and nausea can be symptoms of COVID-19.

How do I collect a stool sample?

Your child care and early years service provider will either ask for your consent to collect a stool sample to send to the lab for testing, OR will provide you with a stool sample kit with the tools you need to collect a stool sample at home. When the stool sample is collected, contact your child care provider for delivery to the lab.

For step by step instructions on how to collect stool samples, refer to [How to collect, store and label stool specimens](#).

Important Points to Remember:

- Requisition must be completed (including the outbreak number) correctly, or the sample will be rejected by the laboratory. If you do not know the number, please ask your child care provider.
- Stool samples must be stored in a cool area, such as in a cooler with ice or an ice pack, or in the fridge.

Hand Hygiene

In addition to stool sample testing, implementing hand washing practices is one of the most important ways to stop the spread of illness. Hand hygiene includes washing hands with soap and water or hand sanitizing with alcohol-based hand rub. Soap and water should be used if hands are visibly soiled.

What if I still have questions?

Contact your child care and early years service provider if you have questions or would like clarification. Your provider can contact the Ottawa Public Health investigator working with them, for more information, if required.

Thank you for doing your part to help protect the community!

Last edited: June 2022