Faecal calprotectin sample collection

We’ve written this factsheet to explain how to collect a stool (faecal) sample so it can be tested for faecal calprotectin. We hope it helps to answer some of the questions you may have.

Why do I need to have a faecal calprotectin test?

We have asked you to provide a sample of your stool (faeces) to be tested for faecal calprotectin (FCP). This test is an easy, non-invasive test which will help us to differentiate between inflammatory and non-inflammatory bowel disorders. If you have any queries about the test please speak to your doctor.

What does the test involve?

The test involves collecting a sample of stool into the provided container. The laboratory team will then measure a substance called calprotectin.

Is there anything I need to do before I collect the sample?

Unfortunately, some drugs can affect the faecal calprotectin result, especially painkillers such as Ibuprofen, Naproxen or Diclofenac (or other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, NSAIDS). If you are taking any of these medications you need to stop taking them for four weeks before you do the test (after consultation with your doctor).

You should also avoid smoking and drinking alcohol for at least 24 hours before collecting the sample as these may also affect the faecal calprotectin results.

How do I collect the stool sample?

We have given you a small plastic collection pot to collect the sample in. It is important that the bowel motion you take the sample from has not been in the toilet bowl, as any water or urine present could affect the test result. If you need to urinate (pee), do this first, and then collect the stool sample. It is also important that the sample does not come into contact with any toilet cleaner or freshener products.

How to collect a stool sample

1. Label the container with your name, date of birth and the date.
2. Wear disposable rubber or plastic gloves.
3. Place something in the toilet to catch the stool, such as a potty or an empty plastic food container, or spread clean newspaper or plastic wrap over the rim of the toilet. Make sure the sample doesn’t touch the inside of the toilet.
4. Place the sample in the clean screw-top container and screw the lid shut. A sample of at least 2cm / 1 inch across is required (about the 2 size of a small walnut). It is important that sufficient sample is provided; otherwise the test may not be able to be completed.
5. Put the gloves and anything else you used to collect the sample in a plastic bag, tie it up and put it the bin.
6. Wash your hands thoroughly.

The sample must be returned to your GP or the hospital within three days of collection. Otherwise we may not be able to test it.
How do I store the sample once I have collected it?

Once you have sealed the sample in the collection pot, store it at room temperature out of direct sunlight and away from food and drink. Do not store the sample in a refrigerator at any time. Return the collection to your GP surgery or hospital as soon as possible after collection to avoid it being spoilt.

Where do I take the collection?

Return the collection to your doctor’s surgery or hospital, who will ensure it is sent to the laboratory. Please ensure that:
• you have completed your name, date of birth and the date of the collection period on the pot
• you have included the request form from your doctor (if your doctor has not given you a request form, please ask for one before collecting the sample)

If you don’t complete the information on the collection bottle, or don’t send an accompanying request form, this could cause significant delays in the processing of your sample, and you may be asked to repeat the collection.

When will the results be available?

Your doctor will be issued with a report of your results. This will take two to four weeks.

Contact us

If you have any questions or queries, please contact our paediatric gastroenterology nurse specialists on telephone: 023 8120 3814