



LABORATORY TESTING GUIDELINES FOR NOROVIRUS

Testing for norovirus may not be useful for outbreaks that are clinically and epidemiologically consistent with norovirus and occur in areas where norovirus is known to be circulating. Consult with the Williamson County and Cities Health District (WCCHD) Communicable Disease Management Team (CDMT) at 512-943-3660 to determine the need for laboratory testing. Control measures should never be delayed while awaiting laboratory confirmation.

- Specimens should be collected as soon as possible after the onset of illness, within 48 hours. Viral shed is greatest during this phase.
- Collect one specimen from a minimum of four to a maximum of ten ill individuals in support of an outbreak investigation.

Long term care facilities should submit samples to a private laboratory for testing. Check with the laboratory for specimen submission requirements. Call WCCHD CDMT at 512-943-3660 if your facility is unable to submit specimens to a private laboratory.

General Stool Specimen Collection Guidelines

1. **IMPORTANT:** Complete the specimen label with name, date of birth, and date of collection.
2. Wash hands and follow CDC recommendations for using personal protective equipment in healthcare settings for preventing the transmission of infectious agents.
3. Lift the toilet seat and place newspaper or plastic wrap over the bowl, leaving a space in front for the urine to pass freely into the toilet.
4. Lower the toilet seat so that the newspaper or plastic wrap is held in place with a slight depression in middle for collecting the sample.
5. Use a tongue blade or plastic spoon to collect a sample of the stool and place the sample into the sterile labeled container. Collect 2 – 3 teaspoons of stool.
6. Do not place anything else in the container. Replace the lid and close tightly.
7. Refrigerate the sample until it is transported.
8. Follow laboratory guidelines for transporting the sample.

NOTE: If the sample is left at room temperature, bacteria can grow and interfere with testing. Freezing the sample will limit what testing can be performed.