



## Specimen Collection Patients' Information Sheet

### Urine Samples

#### What is Urine Analysis

- Urine Analysis: is a set of screening tests that can detect some common diseases. It may be used to screen for and/or help diagnose conditions such as UTI, Kidney disorders, liver problems, diabetes or other metabolic conditions. The clinical information obtained from a urine specimen is influenced by the collection method, timing, and handling. Determining which urine collection method and container should be used depends on the type of laboratory test ordered.

#### What urine samples are used for

- Your doctor may ask for a urine sample to help him/her diagnose or rule out certain health conditions.
- Urine contains waste products that are filtered out of the body. If the sample contains anything unusual, it may indicate an underlying health problem.
- Urine tests are most commonly carried out to check:
  - for infection – such as a urinary tract infection (UTI) or the sexually transmitted infection (STI) or chlamydia in men
  - if a person is passing any protein in their urine as a result of kidney damage – this is known as an ACR test

#### How to Collect a urine sample

- Your doctor or SIIC technician will give you a container – Sterile if the test is for **Urine Culture** or **Chlamydia** or just a new container if it the doctor requires just a urine analysis. Your doctor will explain to you the necessary steps.
- You can collect a urine sample at any time of day (random specimen), unless your doctor indicates that its needed for **Urine Culture** or **Chlamydia** investigations. If that's the case, then you will need to collect the first urine in the morning (timed collection).
- **To collect a clean urine sample:**
  - label the container with your name, date of birth and the date urine sample is being taken
  - wash your hands
  - start to urinate and collect a sample of urine "mid-stream" in a sterile screw-top container
  - screw the lid of the container shut
  - wash your hands thoroughly
  - Follow any other instructions your doctor gives you.

#### What's a mid-stream urine sample?

- A **mid-stream** urine sample means you don't collect the first or last part of urine that comes out – this reduces the risk of the sample being contaminated with bacteria from:
  - your hands
  - the skin around the urethra – the tube that carries urine out of the body

**NB. Urine for culture must be collected in a container marked sterile. Even if container is new and sealed it must be marked sterile to be deemed acceptable. Specimens placed in any other container runs the risk of being contaminated.**

**Spice Isle Imaging Centre, Inc.**

P.O. Box 2052, Carenage, St. George's, Grenada

Tel: (473) 444-7679 Fax (473) 444-7679 (Cell) 405-9290

**Sub-Office:** Ben Jones St., Grenville, St. Andrew

Tel/Fax: (473) 442-6774 (Cell) 459-5926

Email: [info@siic.gd](mailto:info@siic.gd) Website: [www.spiceisleimaging.com](http://www.spiceisleimaging.com)

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## Storing a urine sample until you hand it in to the Laboratory

- If you cannot deliver your urine sample within an hour of collecting it, you should keep it in the fridge at around 4C (39F) for no longer than 24 hours.
- Always put the container of urine in a sealed plastic bag first.
- The bacteria in the urine sample can multiply if it is not kept in a fridge. If this happens, it could affect the test results.

## Stool (faeces) Samples

### What are stool samples used for?

- Your doctor may ask you for a stool sample to help him/her diagnose or rule out a particular health condition.
- Stools contain bacteria and other substances that are present in the digestive system.
- By testing the levels of these substances and bacteria in your stools, it's possible to work out what's happening in your digestive system.
- For example, a stool sample can be tested to help diagnose:
  - gastroenteritis – a common condition that causes diarrhoea and vomiting, and is usually the result of a bacterial or viral tummy bug;
  - inflammatory bowel disease – such as Crohn's disease, a condition that causes inflammation of the lining of the digestive system, and ulcerative colitis, a condition where the colon and rectum become inflamed.

### How to Collect a stool sample

- Your doctor would explain how to collect the stool sample. It should be collected in a clean, dry screw-top container. Specimen container should be provided by your doctor or SIIC technicians especially for investigations that relates to occult blood, helicobacter or pylori. Your doctor will provide you with specific instructions for each of these.
- Your doctor or a member of SIIC staff will give you a plastic (specimen) container to use, although you can use any clean container that can be sealed except the investigation is for occult blood or helicobacter, pylon test, then your doctor will provide you with specific instructions for each of these.
- Try not to collect urine or water from the toilet with the stool sample, but don't worry if you do – if you need to urinate, do this first before collecting the stool sample.
- To collect a stool sample:
  - label the container with your name, date of birth and the date on which you are collecting the sample
  - place something in the toilet to catch the stool, such as a potty or an empty plastic 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
  - use a spoon or spatula to place the sample in a clean screw-top container and screw the lid shut
  - aim to fill container **only** to the line indicated on the sample container. Do not fill to the rim of the container.
  - put anything you used to collect the sample in a plastic bag, tie it up and put it the bin
  - wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water
  - Follow any other instructions your doctor gives you.

### Storing a stool sample before you hand it in

- Stool samples should be handed in as soon as possible, as some can't be analysed if they've been refrigerated – your doctor or SIIC technician will tell you if this is the case.
- If you can't hand the stool sample in immediately, you should store it in a fridge, but for no longer than 24 hours.
- Place the container in a sealed plastic bag first.
- Stool samples must be fresh – if they aren't, the bacteria in them can multiply. This means the levels of bacteria in the stool sample won't be the same as those in your digestive system, and if the levels of bacteria don't match, the test results may not be accurate.
- If you can't hand your stool sample in immediately, find out how long it can be kept in the fridge. Your doctor or SIIC technician who requested the test will be able to tell you.

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