How to Collect Bowel Movement Samples on Cards

Your doctor has given you cards or a kit to collect bowel movement samples at home. Your bowel movement (stool or poop) samples will be tested for blood that you cannot see. Blood in the stool may be a sign of colon cancer or bowel disease.

GETTING READY

- **For 7 days before you collect the bowel movement samples, and during the time you are collecting them, do not use:**
  - Alcohol (do not have more than 1 drink per day).
  - Iron pills.
  - Drugs such as aspirin, ibuprofen, or Aleve (pills for fever, pain or headache, NSAIDS).
  - Antiseptic solution containing iodine near the rectal area.
  - Blood thinners, some anti-cancer drugs, and cortisone taken by mouth **(talk to your doctor about these).**

- **Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your doctor.**

- **For three (3) days before you collect the bowel movement samples, and during the time you are collecting them avoid**:
  - Vitamin C tablets or medicines containing Vitamin C
  - Iron pills that also have Vitamin C.
  - Drugs such as aspirin, ibuprofen, or Aleve (see above - avoid these for 7 days before collecting samples).
  - Antiseptic solution containing iodine near the rectal area (see above - avoid these for 7 days before collecting samples).
  - Citrus fruits and juices.

Three (3) days before you collect the bowel movement samples, you need to start a special diet. You need to stay on this special diet for 5 days.

EAT THESE FOODS ON THE DIET

- White meat chicken.
- Fish.
- Pork, ham, bacon.
- Cooked (not raw) fruits and vegetables.
- A bowl of bran cereal every day (This helps you have a bowel movement every day.)

DO **NOT** EAT THESE FOODS

- **Red** meat, such as:
  - Beef (hamburger).
  - Lamb.
  - Liver.
  - Dark meat chicken.
- Horseradish.
- Raw fruits and vegetables, especially:
  - Melons.
  - Radishes.
  - Turnips.

(**These foods and the medicines listed above can affect the accuracy of the test results**.)

OTHER INFORMATION

Wait until 3 days after your menstrual period before you collect samples. Do not collect samples if you have bleeding hemorrhoids (piles), or blood in your urine (pee).

HOW TO COLLECT THE BOWEL MOVEMENT SAMPLES

Day 1: Begin the special diet on the day your doctor tells you.
Day 2: Stay on the special diet.
Day 3: Start collecting the samples.

READ THIS BEFORE YOU COLLECT THE SAMPLES

- Stay on your special diet. Put the sample cards and sticks in the bathroom so they will be ready when you have a bowel movement.
- **Before** you have a bowel movement:
  - Put a large plastic bag or Saran wrap under the toilet seat.
  - **Or** put a large plastic bag into a wastebasket to catch the sample.
  - **Or** catch the bowel movement in a **clean** container, such as a clean margarine tub or a clean milk carton with the top cut off. Put the plastic bags or containers in the bathroom so you will be ready to collect the samples.
- Use the stick to collect a **small** amount of stool. Smear it on one of the windows on the card. Ask your nurse to give you a label to put on the front of the card, or write your name and medical record number on the front of the card. Do this BEFORE you smear the sample onto the card.
- Take another sample from a **different** part of the bowel movement. Smear it on the other window of the card. Close the cover. Store the card with the samples in a plastic bag. Throw the rest of the bowel movement into the toilet and flush away. Wash your hands very well.

Day 4: Stay on the special diet. Collect more samples on a card in the same way. Store the card in the plastic bag. Be sure to label the front of the card.
Day 5: Stay on the special diet. Collect more samples on a card. Store the card in the plastic bag. Be sure to label the front of the card.

AS SOON AS YOU FINISH COLLECTING THE SAMPLES

- Go back to eating your normal diet.
- Bring the cards in a plastic bag to your clinic.
- **Do not wait more than 3 days** to bring the cards to the clinic or they will be too old for testing.

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