

## Viral gastroenteritis: Stool specimen guidance for staff

During a viral gastroenteritis outbreak, stool specimens should be submitted from affected residents and staff to attempt to determine the cause of the outbreak.

### Collection and storage

Specimens should be sent as soon as possible and within 24 hours. Samples must be liquid enough to take the shape of the pot.

- Wash hands before and after specimen collection.
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment.
- Wherever possible, obtain a fresh specimen.
- Stool specimens contaminated with urine, e.g. from a commode pan, are acceptable.
- Specimens should be placed in the correct container with the label completed with resident details, date and time.

### Completing the specimen request form

Correct completion of a specimen request form is essential to ensure the Microbiology Laboratory have the information needed to identify which tests to undertake. Inadequate information can result in the specimen not being processed or limited tests being undertaken.

- **Requesting doctor:** This is needed so the result can be sent to the GP
- **Tests required:** Stool specimens are not routinely tested for viruses, therefore, it is important that you request 'virology' testing and that the iLog number is included on the form. As Brian is 65 years old, the sample would routinely be tested for *Clostridioides difficile*. Please note: samples are only routinely tested for *Clostridioides difficile* on people aged 65 years and over
- **Clinical details:** Include information on the form that the Care Home has a suspected viral outbreak of D&V. Also include the signs and symptoms
- **Previous/current antibiotic therapy:** Include recent antibiotic so that sensitivity testing can be undertaken

St Elsewhere District Hospital Department of Microbiology		
Forename <b>JONES</b>	Surname <b>BRIAN</b>	Address <b>Happy Court Care Home, Meadow Road, Sunnyside, North Yorkshire</b>
Date of birth <b>20/05/53</b>	NHS Number <b>452090000</b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female
Specimen type <b>Faeces</b>	Date and time of specimen <b>14/10/18 10.00 am</b>	Requesting Doctor <b>Dr Brown, Sunny Street Surgery, Sunnyside</b>
Tests required <b>Culture and virology iLog number WY/S18.123456</b>		Previous <input checked="" type="radio"/> current antibiotic therapy? Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Please state:
Clinical details <b>Suspected outbreak of viral D&amp;V in Care Home. Nausea and diarrhoea x 2.</b>		
Microbiology Report <b>Salmonella, Shigella, Campylobacter NOT ISOLATED. Clostridioides difficile not detected. Norovirus positive.</b>		