

MEMORANDUM

TO: PHYSICIANS LABORATORY CLIENTS

**FROM: SHARI TALBERT MT(ASCP)SM
MICROBIOLOGY SUPERVISOR**

**SUBJECT: PARA-PAK TRANSPORT SYSTEM FOR STOOL SPECIMENS
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

Question: Why can't a sterile urine cup be used instead of the (entire) 3 vial Para-Pak Transport System?

Answer: Changes in our stool testing methods and new stool tests that we now offer, have made some of our stool tests "transport specific". For example, only preserved specimen (orange cap vial) is acceptable for testing on certain tests such as Giardia/Cryptosporidium antigen testing and Shiga toxin testing.

When a stool specimen is placed in all 3 transport vials, almost any type of stool testing can be performed and the physician can "add on" any additional stool testing. If specimen was originally submitted in the transport system, we are able to accommodate physician add-on requests for up to 3 days without the need to call the patient back for an additional collection and re-submission to the lab.

Also, when the stool transport system is used exclusively, there is no need to determine which vial is needed for which type of test.

Question: What if the courier is waiting, and I haven't transferred the stool to the 3 vial Para-Pak Transport System?

Answer: Stool specimens should be placed into the transport system within 1 hour of collection. If possible, have the courier wait, or send the stool transport vials with the next courier run. When submitted in the Para-Pak transport system, stool specimens are good for up to 3 days.

Question: What if I only have a small amount of stool specimen, not enough for all 3 vials?

Answer: Determine which type(s) of stool tests are needed and approximately how much specimen is present. Then call the Microbiology lab. (402 731-4145 or 1-800-642-1117) for specific instructions. Since the preservative vials have a "fill" line, you will need at least enough to fill to that line if a preserved specimen is required of that particular test. The following are guidelines:

Orange vial: Stool culture, giardia/cryptosporidium antigen, and shiga toxin testing

White vial: Fecal RBCs, WBCs, pH, reducing substances, occult blood, rotavirus antigen, and fecal fat(qualitative)

Green vial and White vial: Complete ova and parasite exam. (Travel history or specific physician request must be included)

Question: Why is there a comment on the report saying "Stool specimen was not submitted in stool (Para-pak) transport media. This test is designed for stool specimens in proper transport. Results may be compromised."?

Answer: Certain tests may be affected by improper transport conditions. This comment is most often seen when no transport system has been submitted for giardia/cryptosporidium antigen testing or complete ova and parasite testing. Shiga toxin testing must be received in the proper transport vial or the test cannot be performed.