



## TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH DIVISION OF LABORATORY SERVICES

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RICHARD S. STEECE, PhD, D(ABMM)  
PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY DIRECTOR

JOHN J. DREYZEHNER, MD, MPH  
COMMISSIONER

**Stool, enema or rectal wash specimens from inpatients or outpatients with suspected Infant Botulism may be submitted to the TN Department of Health Laboratory. Physicians seeking testing for their patients should first call the Epidemiology on-call physician at (615) 741-7247 prior to specimen submission to provide case information and review indications for testing. Testing will not be conducted without a prior clinical consultation with the Epidemiology on-call physician.**

The specimen required for the definitive diagnosis of infant botulism is stool or enema. The best container in which to collect, store and submit fecal specimens in is a **sterile urine container** with a tight, screw-capped lid. ***Do not use*** containers containing fixatives such as those used for ova and parasite collection. If spontaneously passed stool is difficult to obtain due to constipation, an attempt to collect stool in the rectal vault should be made by ***gentle*** digital examination by the team member with the smallest fifth finger. ***If no stool can be obtained digitally, do not wait for a spontaneous bowel movement, collect an enema using the procedure outlined below.***

**Important:** Note that glycerin suppositories yield an unsatisfactory specimen and ***should not be used.*** The procedure described below will yield the best specimen for diagnostic purposes.

### Enema Collection Procedure

1. Attach a 12 to 16 French red rubber (Robinson) catheter to a tapered, catheter-tip syringe.
2. Trim catheter tip to enlarge hole.
3. Lubricate the catheter tip with petroleum jelly or equivalent and insert into distal colon.
4. The volume of sterile, ***non-bacteriostatic*** water to use should be a bedside clinical decision based on the patient's body mass.
5. Inject ***up to*** 30 ml of sterile, ***non-bacteriostatic*** water slowly into distal colon and maintain catheter in rectum. Please note that a ***minimum volume of 10 ml*** is required to enable the most accurate diagnostic analysis.
6. Wait approximately 3 minutes, and then draw enema effluent into the syringe.
7. Have an assistant hold a sterile urine container under the anus during this time to collect any expelled material.
8. Expel all fluid collected in the syringe into the same sterile urine container.
9. Tightly seal the lid. Properly label the container with patient's name, date and time of collection.
10. If more than 5 ml of water is retained in the colon, exert gentle pressure onto left lower abdomen (with your hand or with infant's knee to abdomen) to aid in excretion and to minimize intestinal absorption of water.
11. Send the enema specimen to your laboratory with an order to keep it refrigerated and to expedite shipment to the appropriate botulism diagnostic laboratory.

Please retain all subsequent stool specimens and have your laboratory store them in their refrigerator until a diagnosis has been established by the appropriate laboratory. Please do not send ***extra*** stool specimens unless requested. Please contact 615-262-6362/6300 with any questions regarding specimen collection, requirements or submission. Thank you.



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1. Tightly seal cap on collection container and package the primary container of stool or enema in a zip-top specimen bag.
2. Keep the specimen cold on ice packs NOT frozen.
3. Place your laboratory's test requisition form in separate pouch or second bag.
4. Follow IATA regulations and package the specimen in a styrofoam box with one or more cold-packs. Label box with a **UN 3373**, "Biological Substance Category B" label.
5. Expedite specimen shipment by using a local courier for same day delivery before 2pm, or by using a major service for "priority overnight" delivery. Packages should be shipped for overnight delivery **Monday through Thursday** only. Our laboratory does not accept deliveries on Saturday or Sunday.

Send specimens directly to Tennessee Department of Public Health. **Do not send through your local county public health laboratory as this may delay testing.** Address the package exactly as below:

Infant Botulism Testing  
Tennessee Department of Health  
Laboratory Services  
630 Hart Lane  
Nashville, TN 37216

Phone: (615) 262-6300

**IMPORTANT:** Properly identify and label all packages that contain diagnostic specimens when submitting them to the TDH Laboratory. Always include the sender's name and submitting institution's name, phone number and address. Improperly identified packages may delay testing.

630 Hart Lane  
Nashville, TN 37243  
(615) 262-6300 \* Fax (615) 262-6393



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