

## Specimen Collection, Storage, and Submission

Stool, enema or rectal wash specimens from California inpatients or outpatients with suspected IB may be submitted to the IBTPP laboratory. Physicians seeking testing for their patients should first call the IBTPP on-call physician at (510) 231-7600 prior to specimen submission to provide case information and review indications for testing. Testing will not be initiated without clinical consultation with IBTPP on-call physician.

### Collection:

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 ovum 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. Instead, please follow the enema collection 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 5 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. For California only - please contact 510-231-7676 with any questions regarding specimen collection, requirements or submission. For all other states, please contact your state health department. Thank you.

**Storage of stool or enema samples for shipping:**

All fecal specimens (stool or enema) collected for infant botulism testing require refrigeration only. Do not freeze them.

**Specimen Submission:**

**NOTE: The following specimen shipping instructions are for California ONLY.**

For all other states, please contact your state public health agency for specimen submission instructions.

1. Be certain to tightly seal cap on collection container. Package the primary container of stool or enema in a secondary, leak-proof container; e.g . a ziplock specimen bag.
2. Place a laboratory referral test requisition form (no CDPH forms required) in separate bag pouch or second bag.
3. 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.
4. Expedite specimen shipment by using a local courier for same day delivery, or by using a major service for "priority overnight" delivery. Packages should be shipped for overnight delivery **Monday through Thursday** only.

Send specimens directly to California Department of Public Health (Again, this is for California patients only). Do not send through your local county public health laboratory.

Address the package exactly as below:

**Infant Botulism Laboratory - IBTPP  
California Department of Public Health  
Specimen Receiving, Room B106  
850 Marina Bay Parkway  
Richmond, CA 94804**

Phone number (for overnight courier airbills): exit calling code -1-510-231-7600

**IMPORTANT:** Properly identify and label all packages that contain diagnostic specimens when submitting them to the IBTPP laboratory. Always include the sender's name and submitting institution's name and address. Improperly identified packages may be subject to destruction for security reasons.

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