

Meconium (First Baby Poo) Sample Collection Instruction Sheet

Thank you for collecting a sample of your baby's meconium for the ORIGINS Project. Meconium is the first stool that your baby produces after birth. Meconium is thick, green and tar-like and may be excreted by your baby for collection within the first 24 hours of life. Meconium is a valuable biological sample that will be used to examine how maternal bacteria influence the presence and types of bacteria in the infant's gut. This information sheet will detail how you can collect a meconium sample from your baby and where the sample must be taken for subsequent analysis and storage.

IMPORTANT NOTES FOR SAMPLE COLLECTION

Your baby's meconium sample will need to be sent to Western Diagnostic Pathology at the hospital **immediately after the sample has been collected**

- Ensure to wash your hands prior to, and after collecting the sample to prevent contamination of the meconium sample.
- The sample tubes should be filled from **1 meconium sample only**, and not from several different samples.
- The sample should be split as evenly as possible over the 3 tubes. If the sample is small, filling less than 3 tubes is still beneficial.

STEPS FOR THE MECONIUM SAMPLE COLLECTION

1. Ensure your meconium sample collection kit contains:
 - 2 x Wooden stick
 - 3 x 5ml Collection Tubes
 - 1 pair of gloves
 - 1 x Western Diagnostic request form (partially filled in by ORIGINS staff)
2. The sample may be collected anytime within the 24 hours when you identify that the baby has soiled their nappy with meconium.
3. Change your baby's nappy and put him/her safely in their cot or give your baby to someone to hold whilst you collect the sample.
4. Wash hands thoroughly with warm soapy water and pat dry with a disposable towel. Place clean gloves provided over hands.
5. Remove the lid from the collection tubes ensuring not to touch the rim or inside of the tube. Place tubes on a clean surface.
6. Use the wooden stick to remove a sample of the meconium from the nappy and place in the 5ml tube. Repeat until all of the three tubes are $\frac{3}{4}$ full or until the entire sample is collected (there may only be enough meconium to fill one or two tubes).
7. Seal the tubes tightly with the lids provided.
8. Label each sample tube with the date of collection and place tubes in the biohazard bag provided.
9. Fill in the date and time of the sample collection on the biological request form included in the sample kit, and place the form in the outside pocket of the biohazard bag.
10. When the sample is ready, please give the sample to your midwife and they will send the sample to the Western Diagnostic Pathology Clinic at the hospital for processing.