



**GUAM PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY GUIDELINES
 SPECIMEN REQUIREMENTS FOR
 FOODBORNE ILLNESS COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION**

<p>Case Definition</p>	<p>A patient under investigation (PUI) for Foodborne illness must be vetted by the Department of Public Health and Social Services (DPHSS), and can be defined as a person with the following characteristics:</p> <p>Clinical Criteria: Diarrhea, abdominal cramps/pain, vomiting, and/or fever of greater than 38.6°C or 101.5°F and additional symptoms such as headache, muscle aches, sweat, weight loss, chills, exhaustion, and/or arthralgia; AND/OR</p> <p>NOTE: Sometimes, people have little or no fever, followed by other symptoms and clinical criteria. Others may experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illness of variable severity; common symptoms of diplopia, blurred vision, bulbar weakness, and/or paralysis; • Weakness, splenomegaly, meningitis, anorexia, sometimes constipation and/or neonatal sepsis. • For more information, https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/outbreaks/investigating-outbreaks/confirming_diagnosis.html
<p>Specimen Submission Guidelines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call the DPHSS at 671-689-3942 before collecting and sending specimens for suspected Foodborne illness investigation. NO SPECIMEN WILL BE ACCEPTED AT GPHL WITHOUT PRIOR CONSULTATION WITH THE DPHSS TERRITORIAL EPIDEMIOLOGIST. • Collection kit and containers for specimens will be provided by GPHL and/or reference laboratory and must be labeled with patient's name or Identification (ID) number, specimen ID number and date of collection. • Specimens for transport to the GPHL must be placed in a sealed biohazard transport bag and placed in a sealed, decontaminated primary sterile container. • Specimens collected should be packaged and transported within the facility without attempting to open collection specimen container. Wrap the specimen with absorbent material and place in a sealable specimen biohazard transport bag and into a secondary watertight, leak-proof secondary receptacle. • Fill out COMPLETELY the Guam Public Health Laboratory (GPHL) and/or CDC Submission Form, as needed. • Once specimens ready for transport, call the GPHL 671-300-9082 or 671-300-9085 to inform staff of the specimen delivery. • Specimens will be sent to reference laboratory for testing.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The physician and/or designee will be notified of the result by the GPHL authorized personnel once the final result is received from the reference laboratory.
<p>Specimen Requirements</p>	<p>PREFERRED SPECIMENS FOR FOODBORNE ILLNESS INVESTIGATION:</p> <p><u>Stool and/or Vomitus collected separately for reference laboratory (CDC):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time and investigation must begin immediately after being notified of an outbreak, during the first 48 hours of illness. Container must be secured screw top (e.g. urine cup), affixed with a waterproof label, to be placed in a waterproof biohazard transport bag with absorbent material, pack with refrigerant packs in an insulated box, and delivered within 24 -72 hours. Quantity must be at least 10 mL; preferably 50 mL (half-cup) or 70 mL (one cupful) specimen in secure, leak proof, screw top, clean, dry container. Storage must be refrigerated at 2-8°C; Do not freeze specimens. <p><u>Stool only collected using Para-Pak C&S (Cary Blair, orange capped container for GPHL laboratory testing for BioFire Gastrointestinal Panel:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time and investigation must begin immediately after being notified of an outbreak, during the first 48 hours of illness. Refer to attachment 3 for instructions. <p>TRANSPORT CONDITIONS: less than or equal to 24 hours at room temperature, equal to or more than 48 hours at 2-8°C</p> <p>FOR MORE INFORMATION: https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00001829.htm</p>
<p>Safety Precautions Infection Control for Collecting and Handling Specimens</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow established standards compliant with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Bloodborne Pathogen Standard. This includes wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) and adhering to engineered safeguards, for all specimens regardless of whether they are identified as infectious. <p>For specimen collection, recommend to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use full face shield or goggles, mask to cover all of nose and mouth, gloves, fluid resistant or impermeable gowns. Additional PPE may be required in certain situations. Transport specimens to GPHL. Specimens must be placed in a sealed, decontaminated primary container, which is then placed in a sealed biohazard transport bag. All disposable wastes (PPE) used for collection and processing should be autoclaved.

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Specimen Transport Guidelines	<p>Transport specimens at room temperature within 24 hours; with cold refrigerant packs (2-8° C) within 48-72 hours.</p> <p>Deliver specimens to the GPHL no later than 4 PM, Mondays-Fridays.</p>
Rejection Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specimens sent to the GPHL without prior consultation and notice. • Specimen quantity is insufficient to perform the test; • Specimen collected in glass tubes. • Specimen not packed as described in Specimen Submission guidelines • Specimen is not received at 2-8°C/ packed on cold packs; • Unlabeled specimens, incomplete label on specimen (Refer to Specimen Submission Guidelines). • Illegible/ incomplete Submission form (e.g., no date of onset, clinical description, etc.) • Specimen label does not match the Submission form.
Result Notification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laboratory reports will be forwarded to the Submitting Facility, and the BCDC Administrator via FAX. • Any other request for copies of laboratory reports, apart from that stipulated above will not be accepted.
Contact Information	<p>Alan Mallari, Microbiologist III, GPHL (671) 300-9080 or (671) 300-9081 alanjohn.mallari@dphss.guam.gov</p> <p>Lea Nisay, Microbiologist II, GPHL(Alternate) (671) 300-9083 (671) 300-9098 FAX joy.villanueva@dphss.guam.gov</p> <p>Anne Marie Santos, Central Laboratory Administrator, GPHL (671) 300-9082 or (671) 300-9085 annemarie.santos@dphss.guam.gov</p>

Attachments:

1. Specimen Submission Form, DPHSS GPHL Form 03/31/21
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Data and Specimen Handling (DASH) Identification Form 50.34
3. Instructions for Stool Specimen Collection using Para-Pak C&S (Cary Blair)

References:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Guidelines for Confirming Cause of Foodborne Disease Outbreaks, accessed March 23, 2023; https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/outbreaks/investigating-outbreaks/confirming_diagnosis.html
2. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) Recommendation for Collection of Laboratory Specimens Associated with Outbreaks of Gastroenteritis, accessed March 23, 2023; <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00001829.htm>