

Rotavirus (Stool)



Does this test have other names?

Rotavirus test, Nucleic acid detection test, Isolation in cell culture

What is this test?

The rotavirus test is a stool test used to diagnose a rotavirus infection. Rotavirus affects the intestines and causes vomiting and diarrhea. This infection is especially common in young children, but it can affect adults, too. A rotavirus infection causes a condition called viral gastroenteritis.

Currently, 2 rotavirus vaccines are available for infants. Both vaccines are given by mouth (orally), not by an injection. Getting one of these vaccines will prevent most babies from severe rotavirus diarrhea. But it won't protect them from diarrhea caused by other viruses or bacteria.

Rotavirus passes easily from person to person. It can also be picked up by touching a surface contaminated by someone with rotavirus. Sharing food or drink with an infected person can also spread it. Rotavirus can be dangerous, especially in children, because it can cause dehydration. Dehydration happens when the body doesn't have enough fluids, as can happen with frequent diarrhea and vomiting. Most people don't need treatment for rotavirus, but it's still important to diagnose the infection and watch for signs of dehydration.

Why do I need this test?

You may need this test if you have symptoms of a rotavirus infection. Symptoms usually start about 2 days after coming into contact with the virus. They include:

- Watery diarrhea
- Nausea and vomiting
- Fever
- Belly pain or cramping
- Dehydration
- Loss of appetite

Symptoms of dehydration include:

- Dry mouth and throat
- Less urination than usual
- Dizziness when you stand up
- In children, few or no tears when crying

What other tests might I have along with this test?

You may have other tests to diagnose rotavirus or check for dehydration, including urine tests and blood tests.

What do my test results mean?

Test results may vary depending on your age, gender, health history, and other things. Your test results may be different depending on the lab used. They may not mean you have a problem. Ask your healthcare provider what your test results mean for you.

The lab technician looks for the wheel-shaped rotavirus in the sample. If the test results show rotavirus in your stool sample, you have the infection.

How is this test done?

It's best to do this test 1 to 4 days after symptoms start, but definitely within 8 days of when you first notice symptoms.

You must collect a stool sample for this test. Your healthcare provider or a laboratory staff member will tell you how to collect a sample in a disposable specimen container with a lid. Do not collect stool from the toilet bowl or put toilet paper into the specimen container.

Give your sample to a healthcare provider or lab technician. At the lab, your stool sample will be tested for the rotavirus.

Does this test pose any risks?

This test poses no known risks.

What might affect my test results?

Only having the rotavirus in your digestive tract can cause rotavirus in your stool. Medicines, diet, or lifestyle habits will not affect your results. Be careful not to contaminate the sample with urine or water from the toilet.

How do I get ready for this test?

You don't need to prepare for this test. Tell your healthcare provider about all medicines, herbs, vitamins, and supplements you are taking. This includes medicines that don't need a prescription and any illicit drugs you may use.

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