

# Provincial Laboratory Services



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**Health PEI**  
One Island Health System

## Fecal Fat Testing

December 17, 2015

***This information applies to:** Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Nurse Managers, Directors of Nursing, Clinical Instructors/Educators, PEI Hospital Laboratories, PEI Nursing Homes*

Fecal fat content is measured to confirm steatorrhea, which results from a confined number of digestive system disorders such as pancreatic insufficiency, Celiac disease, Crohn's disease and Whipple's disease. Fecal fat content will be quantified only when ordered by a gastroenterologist. Any other requests must obtain prior approval from the Clinical Chemist. For optimum quantification, a standard 72 hour fecal sample is required. Alternatively, qualitative fat testing will be available for other fecal sample collections.

The accuracy of the fecal fat test is largely determined by the accurate collection of the 72 hours sample and the adequate dietary intake. To ensure accurate results and optimum utilization of the test, both sample collection and dietary intake must be tightly controlled. To this end, standardized patient instructions and preparation must be provided by the Ambulatory Care dietician or alternate and will include:

1. Patient Information Booklet
2. Instructions for specimen collection
3. Required diet before and during specimen collection
4. Provision of Food & Drink Record sheets to be completed
5. Submission of complete Food and Drink Record sheets is mandatory for testing to proceed.
6. Evaluation of patient Food & Drink Records to be provided by a dietician who must define the amount of fat intake before and during stool collection.

### New Testing Laboratory & New Specimen Containers:

Quantitative 72 hour Fecal Fat analysis is temporarily being referred out-of-province to In-Common Laboratories (ICL). Specimen collection kits specific to ICL are to be used when collecting 72 hour fecal specimens. The kits are available from the Laboratory and the Ambulatory Care dietician at the QEH.

### **For more information, contact:**

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