

## Norovirus Detection

Traditionally, Norovirus infections have been diagnosed by visualizing the virus in stool samples using electron microscopy (EM). Reading electron microscopy preparations is laborious, time consuming and an insensitive method, limiting the number of specimens that can be processed in one day.

The Molecular Section of the Microbiology Laboratory at Hamilton Regional Lab Medicine Program (HRLMP) are using real-time, reverse-transcription PCR (RT-PCR) molecular techniques for the detection of Norovirus in faeces. These methods are highly sensitive and specific, and are capable of detecting low levels of virus.

Implementation of the Norovirus RT-PCR test will aid in the identification and control of Norovirus outbreaks in hospital and institutional settings. The test is also suitable for detection of Norovirus in sporadic cases of gastroenteritis. Specimen collection guidelines are as follows:

<b><i>Specimen Type:</i></b>	Faeces, liquid or semi-solid
<b><i>Specimen Container:</i></b>	Dry, sterile container
<b><i>Timing:</i></b>	Collect stool within 48-72 hours of symptom onset
<b><i>Specimen Storage:</i></b>	Refrigerate and transport to Virology Laboratory ASAP
<b><i>Unacceptable Specimens:</i></b>	Rectal Swab, Faeces in Transport Media
<b><i>Turn-around time:</i></b>	Within 24 hours of receipt

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### References

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