

## Overview

### Useful For

Workup of cases of chronic diarrhea

Identifying the use of phosphate-containing laxatives contributing to osmotic diarrhea

### Method Name

Photometric, Ammonium Molybdate

### NY State Available

Yes

## Specimen

### Specimen Type

Fecal

### Ordering Guidance

This test is **only** clinically valid if performed on watery specimens. In the event a formed fecal specimen is submitted, the test will not be performed.

### Specimen Required

**Patient Preparation:** No barium, laxatives, or enemas may be used for 96 hours prior to start of, or during, collection.

**Supplies:** Stool containers - 24, 48, 72 Hour Kit (T291)

**Container/Tube:** Stool container

**Specimen Volume:** 10 g

**Collection Instructions:** Collect a very liquid stool specimen.

### Reject Due To

All specimens will be evaluated at Mayo Clinic Laboratories for test suitability.

### Specimen Minimum Volume

5 g

### Specimen Stability Information

Specimen Type	Temperature	Time	Special Container
Fecal	Frozen (preferred)	14 days	
	Refrigerated	7 days	
	Ambient		

## Clinical & Interpretive

**Clinical Information**

The concentration of electrolytes in fecal water and their rate of excretion are dependent upon 3 factors:

-Normal daily dietary intake of electrolytes

-Passive transport from serum and other vascular spaces to equilibrate fecal osmotic pressure with vascular osmotic pressure

-Electrolyte transport into fecal water due to exogenous substances and rare toxins (eg, cholera toxin)

Fecal osmolality is normally in equilibrium with vascular osmolality, and sodium is the major effector of this equilibrium.

Fecal osmolality is normally 2 x (sodium + potassium) unless there are exogenous factors inducing a change in composition, such as the presence of other osmotic agents (magnesium sulfate, saccharides) or drugs inducing secretions, such as phenolphthalein or bisacodyl. Osmotic diarrhea is caused by ingestion of poorly absorbed ions or sugars.(1) There are multiple potential causes of osmotic diarrhea. Measurement of phosphate and/or magnesium in liquid stool can assist in identifying intentional or inadvertent use of magnesium and/or phosphate-containing laxatives as the cause.(2-4) The other causes of osmotic diarrhea include ingestion of osmotic agents such as sorbitol or polyethylene glycol laxatives, or carbohydrate malabsorption due most commonly to lactose intolerance. Carbohydrate malabsorption can be differentiated from other osmotic causes by a low stool pH (<6).(5,6)

Non-osmotic causes of diarrhea include bile acid malabsorption, inflammatory bowel disease, endocrine tumors, and neoplasia.(1) Secretory diarrhea is classified as non-osmotic and is caused by disruption of epithelial electrolyte transport when secretory agents such as anthraquinones, phenolphthalein, bisacodyl, or cholera toxin are present. The fecal fluid usually has elevated electrolytes (primarily sodium and chloride) and a low osmotic gap (<50 mOsm/kg). Infection is a common secretory process; however, it does not typically cause chronic diarrhea (defined as symptoms >4 weeks).

**Reference Values**

An interpretive report will be provided

**Interpretation**

Phosphorus elevation above 102 mg/dL is suggestive of phosphate-induced diarrhea.(4)

**Cautions**

Phospholipids contained in liposomal drug formulations (eg AmBisome) may be hydrolyzed in the test due to the acidic reaction pH and thus lead to elevated phosphate results.(1,2)

In very rare cases, gammopathy, in particular type IgM (Waldenstrom macroglobulinemia), may cause unreliable results.

**Clinical Reference**

1. Steffer KJ, Santa Ana CA, Cole JA, Fordtran JS: The practical value of comprehensive stool analysis in detecting the cause of idiopathic chronic diarrhea. *Gastroenterol Clin North Am.* 2012;41:539-560
2. Ho J, Moyer TP, Phillips SF: Chronic diarrhea: the role of magnesium. *Mayo Clin Proc.* 1995;70:1091-1092
3. Fine KD, Santa Ana CA, Fordtran JS: Diagnosis of magnesium-induced diarrhea. *N Engl J Med.* 1991;324:1012-1017
4. Fine KD, Ogunji F, Florio R, Porter J, Ana CS: Investigation and diagnosis of diarrhea caused by sodium phosphate. *Dig Dis Sci.* 1998;43(12):2708-2714
5. Eherer AJ, Fordtran JS: Fecal osmotic gap and pH in experimental diarrhea of various causes. *Gastroenterology.* 1992;103:545-551
6. Casprary WF: Diarrhea associated with carbohydrate malabsorption. *Clin Gastroenterol.* 1986;15:631-655

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**Performance****Method Description**

In the presence of sulfuric acid, inorganic phosphate and ammonium molybdate form an ammonium phosphomolybdate complex. The concentration of phosphomolybdate formed is measured photometrically and is directly proportional to the inorganic phosphate concentration. (Package insert: Roche Phosphorus reagent. Roche Diagnostics; V9.0 12/2019)

**PDF Report**

No

**Specimen Retention Time**

7 days

**Performing Laboratory Location**

Rochester

**Fees & Codes****Test Classification**

This test has been modified from the manufacturer's instructions. Its performance characteristics were determined by Mayo Clinic in a manner consistent with CLIA requirements. This test has not been cleared or approved by the US Food and Drug Administration.

**CPT Code Information**

84100