ASCLS Mission:
The mission of ASCLS is to make a positive impact in health care through leadership that will assure excellence in the practice of laboratory medicine.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:
https://www.webmd.com/digestive-disorders/digestive-diseases-diarrhea#1
https://www.cdc.gov/DiseasesConditions/
https://labtestsonline.org/conditions/diarrhea
https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/diarrhea/symptoms-causes/syc-20352241
https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/4108-diarrhea

REFERENCES:
WebMD—https://www.webmd.com/digestive-disorders/poop-chart-bristol-stool-scale

The content in this brochure is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you

Your Safety and Service Experience Are Important To Us!

Laboratory Patient Safety Tips:
Diarrhea & Stool Testing

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What is diarrhea?
• Diarrhea is loose, mushy, semi-liquid or liquid stools (bowel movements). You have diarrhea if you have these types of stools three or more times in less than 24 hours.
• Acute diarrhea is diarrhea that lasts a short time (usually one or two days but may last longer). Chronic or persistent diarrhea usually lasts 14 days or more.
• Acute diarrhea lasting more than a few days may be a sign of a more serious problem.

What causes diarrhea?
The most common cause of acute diarrhea is a virus that infects your stomach. This type of infection is usually short term and resolves by itself. Other causes include but are not limited to:
• Infections (bacteria, parasites, and fungus)
• Problems with immune system or diseases that affect the stomach, small intestine or colon (i.e. Celiac disease, Crohn’s disease, Whipple’s disease)
• Foods (i.e. allergies, intolerances, artificial sweeteners)
• Medications (i.e. laxatives, antibiotics, chemotherapy, heartburn treatments, diabetic treatments, heart disease treatments, birth control, anti-depressants)
DO NOT stop taking any medications without speaking with your physician first.

What if my doctor orders stool testing?
In some cases, your doctor may order stool testing to determine what may be causing the diarrhea. Important information related to testing includes:
• Ask for complete instructions and lab containers to assure that the correct specimen is collected.
• Follow all collection instructions exactly. If you have questions on the instructions, be sure to ask.
• If containers have liquid in them, do not remove any of the liquid.
• If your diarrhea stops before collecting the specimen, call your doctor and tell them your diarrhea stopped. Most stool testing should only be performed on diarrhea type specimens. Testing on non-diarrhea specimens may give incorrect test results.
• Antacids, barium, bismuth, anti-diarrheal medication or oily laxatives should not be used prior to collection of the specimen.
• If a test is to be collected more than one time, verify when to collect (e.g. collect on separate days, collect on separate bowel movements).
• Collect stool specimen so it does not come into contact with urine, toilet water, or toilet tissue.
• Return collected stool specimen to the laboratory as soon as it is collected.
• Make sure all containers are tightly sealed so they do not leak and that your full name, date of birth and collection date are written on them.

Stephen Lewis, MD and Ken Heaton, MD, from the Bristol Royal Infirmary, developed the original chart and stool type definitions from a 1997 study with the help of 66 volunteers.