

Faecal Calprotectin Test

This information sheet is for people who want to learn about faecal calprotectin testing for inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) monitoring and diagnosis.

Key points

- Faecal calprotectin (FC) is a protein that shows up in stool when there is inflammation in the gut.
- FC testing is a stool test used to help tell apart IBD and IBS, monitor disease activity, and check whether treatment is working.
- Eligible patients can receive a rebate for a FC test. It is listed on the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS).

What is faecal calprotectin?

The FC test is a stool test that measures the amount of calprotectin in your stool. It can be referred to as a “poo pot test” in some clinics. It provides a simple, non-invasive way to detect inflammation in the bowel, without the need for a colonoscopy or imaging test as often. You'll collect a small stool sample at home using a kit from your doctor or pathology centre. The sample is then sent to a laboratory for testing.

Why is it used for IBD?

- Telling apart IBD and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)
- Monitoring disease activity
- Checking how treatment is working
- Deciding on next steps

What can affect results?

Higher FC levels can be caused by some infections, certain medications and other bowel conditions. Anti-inflammatory pain killers (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen are known to affect results. If possible, collect your sample four weeks after stopping NSAIDs.

How much does it cost?

For eligible patients, a Medicare rebate applies. There are generally no out-of-pocket costs, but this can vary depending on the pathology provider and your individual circumstances. Talk to your GP or pathology center about what you can expect to pay or check MBS online for current information.

How is the test done?

Your doctor or pathology provider will give you a collection kit. It usually includes a small sample pot, a collection tool, and instructions. Some centers may provide additional equipment such as a collection tray (a small tray that sits in the toilet bowl to help catch the sample). Collection trays are not always available, but it's worth asking for it as it can be helpful. If one isn't available, see the collection tips below.

Understanding your results

Your results will be interpreted alongside your symptoms and other assessments by the team who ordered the test.

As a general guide, FC levels are often interpreted as follows:

FC level (µg/g)	What it may indicate
<50	Low likelihood of inflammation
50-250	Borderline (further investigation may be needed)
250-500	High likelihood of inflammation (e.g. active IBD)
>500	Severe inflammation (strongly suggestive of IBD)

More information on faecal calprotectin and tips on collecting a stool sample can be found by scanning the QR code below.

For help or information

Scan QR code for website:

Phone: 1800 138 029

