IMPORTANT NOTES:
1. The typical “rice water” stool is not present in most cases of cholera.
2. The Department of Health must be immediately notified telephonically of all suspect cases of cholera. Do not wait for a laboratory result before.

If > 2 hour delay before processing, place the stool specimen Cary-Blair transport medium as described in the steps below. If possible, the transport medium should have been chilled for 1 to 2 hours.

1. Collect a small amount of stool by inserting a sterile cotton tipped swab into the stool, in the green topped container, and rotating it
2. If mucous and shreds of intestinal epithelium are present, these should be sampled with the swab.

3. Immediately insert the swab into the transport medium.
4. The swab should be pushed completely to the bottom of the tube of transport medium.

5. Break off and discard the top portion of the swab-stick that is protruding above the edge of the container, leaving the cotton tip in the transport medium.

6. Replace the screw cap on both containers and tighten firmly.
7. Place labels on both the bottles (i.e. the transport medium AND the green top container with stool). Include all the required patient detail, clinical presentation and history, and the name of the attending healthcare practitioner. State the nature of the specimen (i.e. stool or rectal swab).
8. If there is a delay in transport (or processing in the laboratory) immediately place both containers in a refrigerator (at 4°C) or cold box until collected by the courier. DO NOT FREEZE.
9. Send both containers to the laboratory for testing, and specifically request testing for cholera in additional to standard tests (i.e. **MC&S and cholera**). Cholera is not routinely tested for.

Collection of RECTAL SWABS:
1. Moisten the swab in sterile transport medium (Cary-Blair).
2. Insert swab gently into the rectal sphincter (2 to 3cm) and rotate to sample anal crypts. Remove swab and check for visible faeces.
3. Immediately insert the swab into the transport medium (see steps above), label the specimen, and deliver to laboratory promptly.
4. If delays are anticipated, the swab in transport medium should be refrigerated. DO NOT FREEZE.