

# Urine Culture

## What is a urine culture?

A urine culture is a test of a sample of urine to see if there are germs in your urine. If the test is positive, your healthcare provider can use the information to prescribe medicine to treat the infection.

## Why is this test done?

A urine culture is done to diagnose or confirm an infection in the urinary tract. Sometimes it is done to make sure an infection has been completely treated. The urinary tract includes the kidneys, bladder, and urethra, which is the tube that drains urine out of the body.

The test will tell your healthcare provider:

- If there is an infection
- What kind of bacteria are causing an infection
- Which antibiotic medicine will best treat the infection

## How do I prepare for this test?

- You may need to avoid taking certain medicines before the test because they might affect the test result. Make sure your healthcare provider knows about any medicines, herbs, or supplements that you are taking. Don't stop any of your regular medicines without first consulting with your healthcare provider.
- Talk to your healthcare provider if you have any questions about the test.

## How is the test done?

There are 2 methods for collecting a urine specimen: the clean-catch method and the catheterization method.

- For the **clean-catch method**, you clean your genital area, start urinating, and then catch some of the urine in a sterile cup.
- The **catheterization method** may be used if you have trouble with the clean-catch method or if a sample is needed from an infant or young child or from someone who cannot control their urine. Your healthcare provider cleans the genital area and then passes a thin flexible tube into the urethra and up into the bladder to collect a sample of urine.

The sample of urine is sent to a lab to see if any bacteria grow from it.

## How will I get the test result?

Ask your health care provider when and how you will get the result of your test. It usually takes 2 to 4 days for the urine culture result.

## What does the test result mean?

A **negative** test result is a normal result, which means no bacteria grew in the culture and you probably do not have an infection.

Usually a **positive** test result means you have a urinary tract infection. However, the result could be positive when you don't have an infection if too many bacteria from your skin got into the sample.

## What if my test result is not normal?

Test results are only one part of a larger picture that takes into account your medical history and current health. Sometimes a test needs to be repeated to check the first result. Talk to your healthcare provider about your result and ask questions.

If your test result is not normal, ask your healthcare provider:

- If you need additional tests
- What kind of treatment you need
- When you need to be tested again
- How to keep from getting another infection

Developed by RelayHealth.

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