

Q: What types of Drug Tests are there & How do they work?

Urine Testing:

Your blood is continuously cleansed by your kidneys. What is cleansed out of your blood are toxins, such as any drugs which you may have taken. Toxins are then removed through urination. While most substances tested for are water soluble (meaning they will be completely removed from your system within a few days), THC is fat soluble, requiring longer periods to be flushed from your cells, see the chart on detection times for more specifics.

Blood Testing:

Ingested drugs circulate in your bloodstream. When a sample of your blood is taken and tested for different drugs, results will indicate many substances recently ingested. Blood testing is used very seldom due to complications with blood infections, and the fact that detection times are extremely short. Blood testing can also be expensive.

Hair Testing:

Your bloodstream nourishes developing hair follicles. Trace amounts of ingested drugs become entrapped in your hair follicles and remain in the hair as it grows, until cut. A person's drug use history can be obtained from the hair of any individual. Drug use can be detected from months, even years past, depending on the length of the sample.

Breath Testing:

Breath tests currently screen for the presence of alcohol. The basis is that your lungs exhale with an amount of alcohol in your breath equal to that within your blood stream. Alcohol remains in the blood stream for 12 to 24 hours after consumption.

Q: Who Uses Urine Tests?

Employers:

Employers receive incentives to use urine testing., As part of pre-employment and/or random on the job testing.

Law Enforcement:

Anyone on probation or incarcerated may be subject to urine testing by Law Enforcement. Citizens are only subject to a Urine Test by Law Enforcement if ordered by a judge.

Schools:

Students are increasingly being tested for participation in extra-curricular activities. So far, the courts have held that blanket testing of all students is not permissible.

Parents:

Home test kits are available over-the-counter in most areas. Treatment centers regularly make home tests available to parents at no charge. Drug war hysteria equates all use of drugs to abuse encouraging parents to put children in treatment at the first sign of use.

Health Care Agencies:

Hospitals routinely test blood and urine for medical purposes, but have been known to share results with government agencies. Ask your health care provider to confirm that any testing of you or your child will remain strictly confidential. Psychiatrists also use testing to evaluate their patients' medications. In some cases a patient could be held at a facility if a test determined they were refusing to take their medications.

Cannabis Action Network believes that any form of drug testing violates your Fourth Amendment rights against unreasonable searches and your Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination.

*Most Federal court rulings have upheld them as constitutional. and employers are under increasing pressure to comply with the Drug Free Workplace Act. Drug tests have something in common with other physical searches in that you have more rights if you do not consent to the search. **Consent surrenders your rights.***

FL CAN's
Just Say Know Series #7



Questions & Answers on Drug Testing:

Harm Reduction Tips

“Should you be forced to drug test there are many things you should know.”

Kevin Aplin, FL CAN Legal Support Director

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Drug Testing FAQ

Q: How long will drugs remain in your system?

A: Various drugs remain in your system for different lengths of time. Psilocybin, for example is expelled within 24 hours, while regular cannabis users can require up to 30 days to clean their system.

Q: Can I fool a urine test?

A: More sophisticated collection methods show the temperature of the sample, test for additives and common *test clean* products like golden seal. Products that guarantee negative results may give you your money back if you fail, but won't pay for your lawyer. If you are unsure if you will test clean, test yourself first or put off the test.

Q: How reliable are urine tests?

A: Answers vary depending on the type of test, the conditions and the manufacturer of the test. ONTrak by Roche claims 100% accuracy of their Urinalysis Panel collection cup. A gas chromatography test is thought to be the most accurate urine test when done correctly, by a federally certified lab. Of course no test can actually claim to be 100% accurate due to potential human error in collecting, processing and reading results.

Q: Do false positives happen?

A: Yes! So do false negatives. Drug tests can interact with prescription drugs to produce false results. Many urine tests now state they do not cross react with common over the counter products. Hemp products consumed orally in large amounts were known to produce positives for THC before industry standards reduced the THC content in hemp.

Q: How do I challenge a false result?

A: If you know the result is false, ask that the sample be sent to a lab for confirmation. Give the technician or physician a complete list of

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all medication you have been taking, including over-the-counter or home remedies. Take another test within 24 hours at a licensed lab for independent results. Contact the legal support network or an attorney if a criminal or civil sanction results from a false positive.

Q: What happens if I refuse a test?

A: FL CAN suggests that you refuse all drug tests unless a Judge orders the test. Private employers are not required to drug test, and social agencies do not have the authority to force you to comply. Private employers may choose not to hire you.

Q: How effective is drug testing?

A: Studies of post office employees have been conducted to study the effectiveness of drug testing. The results have shown little difference between the likeliness of having an on the job accident testing positive or not at employee pre-screening. Yet, a study of the federal government's drug testing program showed that it cost an estimated \$77,000 to find a single drug user. Based on the 1990 cost of \$11.7 million spent on nearly 29,000 tests, 153 (0.5%) tested positive. (See ACLU Drug Testing a Bad Investment)

Organizing Against Testing:

If you are a member of a union, lobby your union to oppose testing and negotiate contracts that prohibit or restrict the employer's ability to test.

Challenge the accuracy of testing. Many labs used by employers may have sub-standard procedures. Demanding more sophisticated and accurate testing could make it more cost prohibitive for employers.

Lobby your Legislature that drug testing does not correlate to a safer happier workforce.

Ask to see your legislators' urine and blood test results.

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*Substance Detection Time:	
Substance	Detection
Amphetamines	2-5 days
Barbituates (Short-Acting)	2 days
Barbituates (Long-Acting)	3-4 weeks
Benzodiazepines	7-10 days
THC (Marijuana) (See Chart)	5-60 days
Clenbuterol	4-6 days
Cocaine	1-4 days
Codeine	5-7 days
Euphorics (Ecstasy)	5-7 days
Ketamine (Special K)	5-7 days
LSD (ACID)	7-10 days
Methamphetamines	5-7 days
Nicotine (Tobacco)	4-10 days
Opiates	5-7 days
Peptide hormones	undetectable
Phencyclidine (PCP)	2-4 days
Phenobarbital	10-20 days
Propoxyphene	6 hours to 2
Psilocybin (Shrooms)	24 hours
Steroids (anabolic oral)	14-28 days
Steroids (anabolic parenterally)	1-3 months

Cannabinoids (THC, Marijuana)	
*Based upon consumption rates	
1 time only	5-8 days
2-4x per month	11-18 days
2-4x per week	23-35 days
5-6x per week	33-48 days
Daily	49-63 days

* These times are only a general guideline. The variables to be considered are analytical method used, drug metabolism, patient's condition, fluid intake, and method of ingestion.