

Urea Breath Test (*H. pylori* Testing)

This handout will tell you about the urea breath test. If you have any questions, ask your nurse or doctor before going to the lab. You must follow these instructions to get the best test results.

Reasons for the Test

The urea breath test will help your doctor decide if you have gastritis (irritation in the lining of the stomach) or an ulcer (sore). The ulcer is caused by bacteria called *H. pylori*. This test may also be used to follow up on your treatment plan.

Patients with PKU: If you have PKU, please contact your doctor. This test cannot be done on persons with PKU.

Getting Ready for the Test

Diet: Do not eat for one hour before your test.

Smoking: Do **not** smoke for at least one hour before your test and do not smoke during your test.

Medicines to avoid: Certain medicines interfere with this test. Avoid these for two weeks before this test. Contact your doctor if you have taken any of the medicines listed below during the two weeks before your test.

- Antibiotics
- Bismuth such as
 - Pepto-Bismol[®],
 - Kaopectate[®], or
 - Helidac[®].

Proton pump inhibitors: These sometimes can cause false negative results. If you have a negative result, your doctor may ask you to stop these medicines for two weeks and repeat the test. These include:

- Prilosec[®], Prevacid[®], Nexium[®], Protonix[®], Aciphex[®], and Zegerid[®].

H2 blockers: These may cause false negative results. If you are taking these medicines, a positive test is positive. If you have a negative result, your doctor may ask you to stop these medicines for two weeks and repeat the test. H2 blockers include:

- Zantac[®],
- Ranitidine[®],
- Pepcid[®],
- Famotidine[®],
- Cimetadine[®],
- Tagamet[®],
- Axid[®], and others not listed.

Approved medicines: You may use any of the medicines below, before the test:

- Topical antibiotics.
- Common antacids such as:
 - Gaviscon[®],
 - Maalox[®],
 - Mylanta[®],
 - Rolaid[®],
 - Tums[®],
 - Milk of Magnesia[®],
 - Gelusil[®],
 - Alka Seltzer[®],
 - Alka-2[®],
 - Titalac[®],
 - Amphojel[®],
 - Alternagel[®], and others.

How the Test is Performed

1. The lab staff will collect a breath sample by having you blow into a small bag.
2. Then a substance called urea will be dissolved in water by the lab staff. You will be asked to drink this water within 2 minutes.
3. Fifteen minutes later, you will give another breath sample by blowing into a second bag.
4. Both bags will be sent to the lab to be tested.

To find out if the treatment has worked, you must wait at least 4 weeks after ending treatment to avoid false negative results.

Who to Call

If you have questions about this test, please call the lab at **(608)-263-6033** between 8:00 am and 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 1/2023 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Clinical Nutrition Services Department and the Department of Nursing. HF#6901