

Urea Breath Test (*H. pylori* Testing)

Please read this handout. 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.

Why am I having this 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) caused by bacteria called *Helicobacter pylori* (or *H. pylori*). This test may also be used to follow up on your treatment plan.

How do I get ready for this test?

- Do not eat for one hour before your test.
- Stop smoking at least one hour before and during your test.
- Certain drugs and over-the-counter medicines interfere with this test. You must be off these medicines for two weeks before this test can be done. Contact your doctor if you have taken any of the medicines listed below during the two weeks before your test.
 - Oral, IV, or intramuscular (IM) antibiotics.
 - Bismuth such as Pepto-Bismol[®], Kaopectate[®], or Helidac[®].
- You can have the test while on proton pump inhibitors. These include Prilosec[®], Prevacid[®], Nexium[®], Protonix[®], Aciphex[®], and Zegerid[®]. If you are taking these medicines a positive test is positive. If you have a negative result, it may be false. Your doctor may ask you to come back for a repeat test after stopping these medicines for two weeks.

- Common use H₂ Blockers such as Zantac[®], Ranitidine[®], Pepcid[®], Famotidine[®], Cimetadine[®], Tagamet[®], Axid[®], and others not listed may reduce test results. You may need to stop taking them for 24-48 hours before testing.
- If you have PKU, please contact your doctor. This test cannot be done on persons with PKU.
- To find out if the treatment for *H. pylori* has worked, you must wait at least 4 weeks after ending treatment to avoid false negative results.

What drugs can I use before this test?

- Topical antibiotics can be used.
- Common antacids such as Gaviscon[®], Maalox[®], Mylanta[®], Rolaids[®], Tums[®], Milk of Magnesia[®], Gelusil[®], Alka Seltzer[®], Alka-2[®], Titalac[®], Amphojel[®], Alternagel[®], and others not listed can be used.

How is this test done?

1. The lab staff will collect a breath sample by asking you to 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.
3. Fifteen minutes later, you will be asked to give another breath sample by blowing into a second bag.
4. Both bags will be sent to the lab to be tested.

Who to Call

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

If you are a patient receiving care at UnityPoint – Meriter, Swedish American or a health system outside of UW Health, please use the phone numbers provided in your discharge instructions for any questions or concerns.

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 ©12/2019. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#6901.