

PATIENT'S GUIDE TO URINE CYTOLOGY

WHAT IS URINE CYTOLOGY?

Urine cytology is a test to look for abnormal cells in your urine. Urine cytology is used along with other tests and procedures to diagnose urinary tract cancers. Urine cytology is most often used to diagnose bladder cancer, though the test may also detect kidney cancer, prostate cancer, ureter cancer and urethra cancer.

Your doctor may recommend a urine cytology test if blood has been detected in your urine (hematuria). Urine cytology may also be used in people who have already been diagnosed with bladder cancer and have undergone treatment. In these cases, a urine cytology test may help detect a bladder cancer recurrence.

WHY IS URINE CYTOLOGY DONE?

As new cells form in the lining of your urinary tract, old cells are shed and washed out of your body in your urine. This is normal. However, blood cells and other types of cells, bacteria, mineral crystals, and other substances can also collect in your urine, and their presence may mean you have a disease in your urinary tract.

Urine cytology is used along with other tests and procedures to diagnose cancers of the urinary tract, including:

- Bladder cancer
- Ureter cancer
- Urethra cancer

Urine cytology can best detect larger and more-aggressive urinary tract cancers. Urine cytology might not detect small urinary tract cancers that grow more slowly.

COLLECTING URINE FOR THE TEST

You will supply a sample of your urine by doing a "clean catch" or "midstream" urine collection. Your doctor may want you to collect the urine sample at his or her office or may allow you to collect the sample at home. You should not collect a urine sample the very first time you urinate in the morning.

Before you start collecting a urine sample, wash your hands thoroughly so you don't get anything in the sample that could interfere with the test.

1. Clean your genital area. Women and girls should spread the skin near the vagina, clean the area with soapy water or an antiseptic cloth, and then rinse well. Men and boys should clean the tip of the penis, pulling back the foreskin if it is intact.
2. Remove the lid of the collection jar and hold the jar without touching the rim.
3. When you start to urinate, let some urine flow into the toilet. Then place the collection jar into the urine stream, collect a few ounces of urine, and take the jar out of the urine stream. Finish urinating into the toilet.
4. Try not to get anything else in the jar (such as toilet paper, pubic hair, or menstrual blood), or else your test results might not be accurate.
5. Screw the lid back onto the collection jar and give it to your doctor. If you collected the sample at home, put it in the refrigerator, and return it to your doctor as soon as possible.

WHAT HAPPEN'S NEXT?

Your urine sample is sent to a laboratory for testing by a doctor who specializes in examining body tissues (pathologist). The pathologist analyzes any cells seen in the urine sample under a microscope. The pathologist notes the types of cells and looks for signs in the cells that might indicate cancer.

RESULTS

The pathologist will send the results of your urine cytology test to your doctor, who will report the results to you. Ask your doctor how long you can expect to wait for your results.

The Urinary System

