How to collect a urine sample for a UTI test

if you use an intermittent (in-out) catheter

UTI INFORMATION SERVICE

THE UROLOGY FOUNDATION

How to collect a urine sample if you use an intermittent (in-out) catheter

Why it matters

To get the most accurate test result, it's important to collect a fresh, clean urine sample using the right technique. A poorly collected sample could give misleading results or require a retest. Follow these steps to get the best sample possible.

1. Wash your hands & prepare your supplies

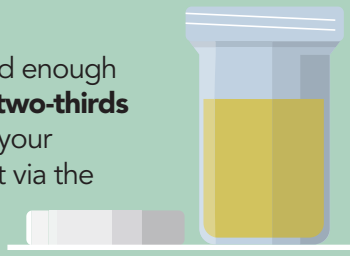
- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- If possible, wear disposable gloves.
- Ensure you have a sterile sample container and a sterile intermittent catheter.

2. Clean the area *(use warm water and a clean cloth or tissue)*

- **Women:** Wipe from front to back.
- **Men:** Wipe the tip of the penis.

3. Insert the catheter & collect the sample

- Insert the catheter as you normally would, following manufacturers instructions for use and a 'no touch' technique.
- **Let the first flow go into the toilet before directing the end of the catheter into the sample pot.** This helps ensure you get a fresh sample.
- Once you've collected enough **(about one-third to two-thirds full),** finish emptying your bladder into the toilet via the catheter.



4. Secure and label the sample

- Close the sample container without touching the inside.
- **If there are any spills on the outside, wipe with a clean tissue or paper towel.**
- Write your name on the label before handing it in.

5. Store and deliver promptly

- **Best option:** Take your sample to the lab or GP **within one hour if possible.**
- If you are unable to deliver the sample the same day - **keep it in the fridge (not freezer)** and drop it off at surgery/clinic **within 24 hours.**
- **If posting:** Follow any instructions provided with your test kit

What to avoid before collecting your urine sample

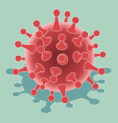
Try to avoid…

- Collecting your sample after drinking lots of water - this can dilute bacteria.

- Taking the sample while on your period - blood can affect results (only if possible).

- Using an old or unsterile container - this may give a false reading.

- Touching the inside of the lid or container - this can introduce bacteria.



- Using soaps, creams, or wipes just before collecting - these may affect the test.

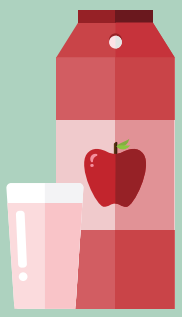
Try to avoid these medications before collecting your sample if it is safe/practical to do so:

- **Diuretics** (such as caffeine, alcohol, or water tablets) - can dilute urine and reduce the chance of detecting bacteria.

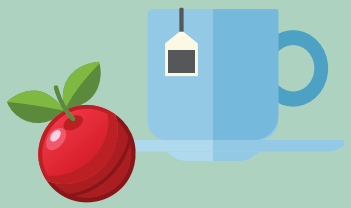
- **Antibiotics** - may affect the test result by partially treating the infection before it's confirmed.

- **Vitamin C (high doses)** - can interfere with some urine tests.

- **Probiotics** - may alter bacterial levels in the urine, affecting test accuracy.



- **Other antimicrobials (e.g. herbal remedies, cranberry supplements, D-mannose)** - might influence results by reducing bacteria before testing.



Extra tips for accurate results

- **Best time to collect:** When your symptoms are at their worst.
- **Morning samples:** A first-morning sample can be helpful if you have ongoing, mild UTI symptoms, as urine is more concentrated after sleeping.
- **Frequent UTIs?** You can ask your doctor or pharmacist for extra sterile sample containers to keep at home for quick collection when symptoms start.
- **If unsure about technique, ask your nurse or doctor for advice.**

What is a UTI?

A Urinary Tract Infection (UTI) is a common infection that can affect anyone, regardless of age, and involves the urinary system but most commonly the bladder. UTIs are the second most common kind of infection after chest infections.

UTIs can be uncomfortable and debilitating. They can be particularly serious in the elderly and those with weakened immune systems. Early detection and proper management are essential to prevent complications.

What are the symptoms?

UTIs can cause a variety of symptoms, which may include:

- Burning sensation during urination
- Cloudy or strong-smelling urine
- Frequent urge to urinate with little or nothing being passed
- Fever or high temperature
- Feeling generally unwell
- Confusion in the elderly

These symptoms can vary in severity, and early detection is important to prevent complications, especially in vulnerable individuals. UTIs can progress to sepsis, a life-threatening condition. Watch for high fever, rapid breathing, and confusion.

Urgent help - If symptoms worsen quickly or you experience any severe symptoms mentioned above, immediate action is necessary: Call NHS 111 for guidance or to find out if you have severe symptoms and need urgent medical care.

For more detailed information on managing and treating UTIs, please refer to our specific treatment-focused information on our website:
https://www.theurologyfoundation.org/urology-health/bladder-conditions/urinary-tract-infections-uti/

For information on the references we have used and information on further reading please contact nurse@theurologyfoundation.org

Our confidential UTI Information Service is here to help you:

0808 801 1108 **Helpline open Tuesdays and Thursdays 10am - 12 noon**

nurse@theurologyfoundation.org

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THE UROLOGY FOUNDATION

www.theurologyfoundation.org

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