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Urine testing or urinalysis is a valuable tool to screen an patient and diagnose their health status. It provides valuable information about hydration, renal and urinary tracts, liver disease, diabetes mellitus and urinary-tract infections. Urine is formed in the kidneys and, through glomerular filtration, tubular reabsorption and tubular secretion, is how the body gets rid of its natural waste products. Urinalysis is easy to undertake but results must be interpreted correctly.

TYPES OF URINALYSIS

There are different ways of analysing urine and for different reasons, namely:

1) 24-hour collection: patient voids into toilet, then all urine is collected for the next 24 hours. As the body chemistry alters constantly, this is used to measure substances, such as steroids, white cells, electrolytes or determine urine osmolarity.

2) First-morning specimen: first specimen of morning (or eight hours after recumbent position).

Best sample for pregnancy testing;

- 3) Fasting specimen: the second voided specimen after a period of fasting;
- 4) Mid-stream urine (MSU): used to obtain urine for bacterial culture. First and last part of urine stream is voided into the toilet to avoid contaminating the specimen with organisms presenting on the skin;
- 5) Random specimen: for chemical or microscopic examination, a randomly collected specimen suitable for most screening purposes;
- 6) Catheter specimen of urine: collected for bacteriological examination if a patient's symptoms suggest the presence of a UTI. The sampling technique used for collection is important.

Why urinalysis is done

Urinalysis is often used:

- prior to surgery
- as a preemptive screening during a pregnancy checkup
- as part of a routine medical or physical exam