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Urinalysis

Urinalysis is a series of tests on your uriner. Doctors use it to check for signs of common conditions or diseases. It can help your doctor detect problems that may be shown by your urine. Other names for it are urine test, urine analysis, and UA.

You may have a urinalysis as part of a routine check of your overall health, for instance as part of an annual physical. Urinalysis is not the same as a drug screening or pregnancy test, although all three tests involve a urine sample. Urinalysis is one way to find certain illnesses in their earlier stages. They include: Kidney disease, Liver disease, Diabetes.

Your doctor may also want to test your pee if you're getting ready to have surgery or are about to be admitted to the hospital. Urinalysis can be part of a pregnancy checkup, too.

If you have symptoms of a kidney or urinary tract problem, you may have the tests to help find out what the problem id. Those symptoms include:

- Pain in your belly
- Pain in your back
- Pain when you urinate or needing to go frequently
- Blood in your urine.

You might also have this test regularly if you have a condition such as a kidney disease that needs to be watched over time.

How Does It Work?

There are three ways to analyze urine, and your test might use all of them.

One is a visual exam, which checks the color and clarity. If your urine has blood in it, it might be red or dark brown. Foam can be a sign of kidney disease, while cloudy urine may mean you have an infection.

A microscopic exam checks for things too small to be seen otherwise. Some of the things that shouldn't be in your urine that a microscope can find include:

- Red blood cells
- White blood cells
- Bacteria
- Crystals (clumps of minerals – a possible sign of kidney stones)

The third part of urinalysis is the dipstick test, which uses a thin plastic strip treated with chemicals. It's dipped into your urine, and the chemicals on the stick react and change color if levels are above normal. Things the dipstick test can check for include:

- **Acidity, or pH:** If the acid is abnormal, you could have kidney stones, a urinary tract infection (UTI) or another condition.
- **Protein:** This can be a sign your kidneys are not working right. Kidneys filter waste products out of your blood.
- **Glucose:** A high sugar content is a marker for diabetes.
- **White blood cells:** These are a sign of infection or inflammation, either in the kidneys or anywhere else along urinary tract.
- **Nitrites:** This means that there is an infection with certain kinds of bacteria.
- **Bilirubin:** If this waste product, which is normally eliminated by your liver, shows up, it may mean your liver isn't working properly.
- **Blood in your urine:** Sometimes this is a sign of infections or certain illnesses.