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A urinalysis is a test of your urine. A urinalysis is used to detect and manage a wide range of disorders, such as urinary tract infections, kidney disease and diabetes.

A urinalysis involves checking the appearance, concentration and content of urine. Abnormal urinalysis results may point to a disease or illness.

For example, a urinary tract infection can make urine look cloudy instead of clear. Increased levels of protein in urine can be a sign of kidney disease. Unusual urinalysis results often require more testing to uncover the source of the problem.

A urinalysis is a common test that's done for several reasons:

* **To check your overall health.** Your doctor may recommend a urinalysis as part of a routine medical exam, pregnancy checkup, pre-surgery preparation, or on hospital admission to screen for a variety of disorders, such as diabetes, kidney disease and liver disease.
* **To diagnose a medical condition.** Your doctor may suggest a urinalysis if you're experiencing abdominal pain, back pain, frequent or painful urination, blood in your urine, or other urinary problems. A urinalysis may help diagnose the cause of these symptoms.
* **To monitor a medical condition.** If you've been diagnosed with a medical condition, such as kidney disease or a urinary tract disease, your doctor may recommend a urinalysis on a regular basis to monitor your condition and treatment.

Other tests, such as pregnancy testing and drug screenings, also may rely on a urine sample, but these tests look for substances that aren't included in a typical urinalysis. For example, pregnancy testing measures a hormone called human chorionic gonadotropin (HCG). Drug screenings detect specific drugs or their metabolic products, depending on the purpose of the testing.

How you prepare

If your urine is being tested only for a urinalysis, you can eat and drink normally before the test. If you're having other tests at the same time, you may need to fast for a certain amount of time before the test. Your doctor will give you specific instructions.

Many drugs, including nonprescription medications and supplements, can affect the results of a urinalysis. Before a urinalysis, tell your doctor about any medications, vitamins or other supplements you're taking.