Chloride (Urine)

Does this test have other names?

Urine chloride

What is this test?

This test measures the amount of chloride in your urine.

Your body tries to keep its acid-base (pH) level in balance. But certain conditions can cause an imbalance. If your body tissues become too alkaline, you may get metabolic alkalosis. Alkaline is the opposite of acidic.

You can get metabolic alkalosis from taking medicines that make you urinate more (diuretics). It can also happen after you have been vomiting. Or it can happen if you've had the contents of your stomach suctioned.

Metabolic alkalosis can also be caused by a rare medical condition, such as Bartter syndrome or Gitelman syndrome. It can also be caused by having low levels of potassium.

If you have metabolic alkalosis, seeing how much chloride is in your urine gives your healthcare provider more information about your condition.

Why do I need this test?

You may need this test if your healthcare provider thinks you have metabolic alkalosis. Signs and symptoms include:

- Trouble thinking
- Confusion
- Seizures
- Numbness or pins-and-needles sensation
- Muscle cramps
- Muscle stiffness
- Slow breathing

Bartter syndrome and Gitelman syndrome can both cause metabolic alkalosis. They also affect your kidneys. Bartter syndrome is usually diagnosed in early childhood. Gitelman syndrome is usually diagnosed in teens or adults.

Signs and symptoms of Bartter syndrome include:

- Trouble concentrating
- Unusual thirst
- Craving for salt
- Urinating more than normal
- Muscle weakness
- Muscle cramps

- Fatigue

Infants with this condition may have poor growth.

Symptoms of Gitelman syndrome include:

- Muscle cramps in your arms and legs
- Fatigue, sometimes severe
- Urinating more than normal, and urinating at night
- Pain in your belly
- Vomiting
- Fever
- Craving for salt

What other tests might I have along with this test?

Your healthcare provider may also order other tests that measure substances in your urine or blood. These include:

- Sodium in your urine
- Potassium in your urine
- pH level of your urine
- Electrolytes in your blood
- Arterial blood gases
- Other substances in your blood, including albumin, blood urea nitrogen, calcium, creatinine, glucose, and phosphate

What do my test results mean?

Test results may vary depending on your age, gender, health history, and other things. Your test results may be different depending on the lab used. They may not mean you have a problem. Ask your healthcare provider what your test results mean for you.

Results for a 24-hour urine sample are given in milliequivalents per 24 hours (mEq/24 hr). Normal results for an adult range from 110 to 250 mEq/24 hr.

Values will vary because of how much salt and fluids you eat or drink and because of sweating.

If your levels are low, you may have a lack of chloride in your diet. It may also mean that you have been vomiting or had medical suctioning of your stomach contents.

If your levels are high, you may have:

- Bartter syndrome or Gitelman syndrome
- Severely low potassium levels

How is this test done?

This test needs a urine sample. Different types of urine tests use different collection methods. Your healthcare provider will tell you how to collect the sample for this test.

You may be asked to collect a random urine sample or collect a sample over 24 hours.

Does this test pose any risks?

This test poses no known risks.

What might affect my test results?

Taking diuretics or vomiting can affect your results.

How do I get ready for this test?

Tell your healthcare provider if you have vomited recently. Be sure your healthcare provider knows about all medicines, herbs, vitamins, and supplements you are taking. This includes medicines that don't need a prescription and any illicit drugs you may use.