

Helicobacter Pylori Urea Breath



Does this test have other names?

Urea breath test, UBT

What is this test?

This is a test that checks your breath for *Helicobacter pylori* (H. pylori), a common infection. H. pylori bacteria are spread through contact with feces from an infected person. Many people get this infection during childhood. The bacteria often live in the stomach lining without causing any symptoms or problems. But for some people, these bacteria cause ulcers and other stomach irritations.

While the bacteria live in your stomach lining, H. pylori make urea, a natural compound in the body. As the bacteria make urea, they create ammonia and bicarbonate. Traces of these can be found in your breath. This is proof that H. pylori is in your body.

Why do I need this test?

You may need this test if you have been treated for H. pylori and your healthcare provider wants to know if the treatment worked. This test is the easiest way to find out if H. pylori are living in your stomach.

What other tests might I have along with this test?

You might also need these tests:

- Blood tests
- Endoscopy, in which a narrow, lighted tube is put into your stomach through your mouth to look at the lining of your stomach and take out small samples for testing
- Stool sample

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.

The urea breath test is accurate more than 95% of the time. If the test is positive, H. pylori is present. If it's negative, you likely do not have H. pylori in your stomach.

How is this test done?

This test is often done first thing in the morning. You may be asked not to eat or drink anything or may be given a special meal to eat. You will also be given a drink or capsule that contains urea. This urea helps the lab figure out if you have H. pylori. About 10 to 20 minutes after taking the drink or capsule, you will breathe into a special container. The air you breathe will be collected and analyzed for signs of H. pylori.

Does this test pose any risks?

This test poses no known risks.

What might affect my test results?

If this test is done too soon after treatment, you could get a false-positive result. This means that the test could show that *H. pylori* are still present even though they are not. To get the best results, you should be retested at least 4 weeks after treatment for *H. pylori*.

Other factors that may affect results include:

- Recent use of antibiotics
- Recent use of bismuth
- Recent use of proton pump inhibitors (PPIs)

The test is a good choice for children, but is less accurate in children younger than 6 years.

How do I get ready for this test?

Follow your healthcare provider's directions about not eating or drinking before the test. You may be asked to stop taking certain medicines before the test.

Tell your provider about all medicines, herbs, vitamins, and supplements you are taking. This includes medicines that don't need a prescription and any illegal drugs you may use.

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