

Mycoplasma (Genital)



Does this test have other names?

Mycoplasma culture

What is this test?

This test looks for microorganisms called mycoplasma in a sample of fluid from your genital area.

Mycoplasma are the smallest free-living organisms. They aren't bacteria or viruses. They don't have cell walls. They can be many different shapes.

Three species of mycoplasma are closely related. These are *Mycoplasma hominis*, *Mycoplasma genitalium*, and *ureaplasma* spp. These may be found in females who have a urinary tract infection, gynecological infection, vaginal discharge, or pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). In males, mycoplasma may be found in some sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

If a pregnant person has these microorganisms in their birth canal, the unborn baby can be exposed to them. They may grow in a baby for a few years. This causes infections that affect the entire body.

For this test, a sample from the cervix in females or the urethra in males is sent to the lab. There it's watched to see if the mycoplasma grow.

Why do I need this test?

You may need this test if you have symptoms of a genital or urinary tract infection. Finding out the cause of your infection helps your healthcare provider figure out how to treat it. Symptoms in females include:

- Cervical and pelvic pain
- Bleeding after intercourse or in between menstrual periods
- Vaginal discharge

Symptoms in males include:

- Inflammation of the urethra
- Itching and tingling of the urethra
- Penile discharge

Not all infections have symptoms.

What other tests might I have along with this test?

Your healthcare provider may also order these tests:

- Culture tests for other diseases of the genital and urinary tract. These might be for gonorrhea, chlamydia, or trichomoniasis to rule out these infections.
- Polymerase chain reaction test (PCR) or nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT). These can find out the strain of mycoplasma. A PCR or NAAT test may be better than a mycoplasma culture for finding mycoplasma in genital secretions.

How is this test done?

This test is done with a sample of fluids from your genital area. If you are female, your healthcare provider will collect the sample by placing a cotton swab on your cervix. If you are male, your provider will place the swab in your urethra.

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.

Normal results are negative. That means that no mycoplasma were found in the sample.

Positive results mean that mycoplasma were found and that you may have an STI or PID. But some mycoplasma may be present without causing disease.

Does this test pose any risks?

This test poses no known risks.

What might affect my test results?

In females, using lubricants, douches, and disinfectants can affect results. So can your monthly period. In males, peeing within an hour before testing may affect results.

How do I get ready for this test?

Females should not use a douche or disinfectants the day before testing. Males should not pee 1 hour before testing. 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 illegal drugs you may use.

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