



[Home](#) → [Medical Encyclopedia](#) → Buccal smear

URL of this page: [//medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003414.htm](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003414.htm)

Buccal smear

A buccal (pronounced "buckle") smear is the painless removal of a sample of cells from the inside of your mouth (cheek) for study.

How the Test is Performed

Your health care provider will gently scrape the inside of the cheek with a small spatula to collect cells for testing. Sometimes, you can do this yourself.

How to Prepare for the Test

Follow the collection instructions as directed by your provider.

How the Test will Feel

You will feel a scraping sensation as cells are removed from the cheek.

Why the Test is Performed

This test is done to get cells for chromosome or DNA analysis, most often for genetic testing.

This test may also help establish sexual identity. When the test is used in this way, it's called the sex chromatin test.

Risks

There are no risks with this test.

Alternative Names

Sex chromatin test; Buccal swab

References

Roy S. Molecular anatomic pathology: principles, techniques, and application to immunohistologic diagnosis. In: Dabbs DJ, ed. *Diagnostic Immunohistochemistry*. 6th ed. Philadelphia, PA: Elsevier; 2022:chap 24.

Review Date 4/24/2023

Updated by: Anna C. Edens Hurst, MD, MS, Associate Professor in Medical Genetics, The University of Alabama at Birmingham, Birmingham, AL. Review provided by VeriMed Healthcare Network. Also reviewed by David C. Dugdale, MD, Medical Director, Brenda Conaway, Editorial Director, and the A.D.A.M. Editorial team.

Learn how to cite this page



Health Content
Provider
06/01/2028

A.D.A.M., Inc. is accredited by [URAC](#), for Health Content Provider ([www.urac.org](#)). URAC's [accreditation program](#) is an independent audit to verify that A.D.A.M. follows rigorous standards of quality and accountability. A.D.A.M. is among the first to achieve this important distinction for online health information and services. Learn more about A.D.A.M.'s [editorial policy](#), [editorial process](#), and [privacy policy](#).

The information provided herein should not be used during any medical emergency or for the diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. A licensed medical professional should be consulted for diagnosis and treatment of any and all medical conditions. Links to other sites are provided for information only – they do not constitute endorsements of those other sites. No warranty of any kind, either expressed or implied, is made as to the accuracy, reliability, timeliness, or correctness of any translations made by a third-party service of the information provided herein into any other language. © 1997-2025 A.D.A.M., a business unit of Ebix, Inc. Any duplication or distribution of the information contained herein is strictly prohibited.

