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Cytology exam of urine

A cytology exam of urine is a test used to detect cancer and other diseases of the urinary tract.

How the Test is Performed

Most often, a clean catch urine sample is collected in your health care provider's office or at home. This is done by urinating into a special cup. The clean-catch method helps prevent germs from the penis or vagina from getting into a urine sample. To collect your urine, you will get a clean-catch kit from your provider. It will contain a cup with a lid and sterile wipes. Follow instructions exactly.

The urine sample can also be collected during cystoscopy. During this procedure, your provider uses a thin, tube-like instrument with a camera on the end to examine the inside of your bladder.

The urine sample is sent to a lab and examined under a microscope to look for abnormal cells.

How to Prepare for the Test

No special preparation is needed.

How the Test will Feel

There is no discomfort with a clean catch urine specimen. During cystoscopy, there may be slight discomfort when the scope is passed through the urethra into the bladder.

Why the Test is Performed

The test is done to detect cancer of the urinary tract. It is often done when blood is seen in the urine.

It is also used to monitor people who have a history of urinary tract cancer. The test may be ordered for people who are at high risk for bladder cancer.

This test can also detect cytomegalovirus and other viral diseases.

Normal Results

The urine shows normal cells.

What Abnormal Results Mean

Abnormal cells in the urine may be a sign of inflammation of the urinary tract or cancer of the kidney, ureters, bladder, or urethra. Abnormal cells may also be seen if the person has had radiation therapy near the bladder, such as for prostate cancer, uterine cancer, or colon cancer.

This test alone cannot diagnose cancer or inflammatory disease. The results need to be confirmed with other tests or procedures.

Risks

There are no risks with this test.

Alternative Names

Urine cytology; Bladder cancer - cytology; Urethral cancer - cytology; Renal cancer - cytology

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