

# *Helicobacter pylori* breath test

Information for patients



## What is a *Helicobacter pylori* breath test?

**This test is used to detect the presence of a species of gut bacteria called *Helicobacter pylori*.**

*H. pylori* can cause ulcers in the lining of the stomach and intestines which may result in symptoms such as abdominal pain, nausea, bloating or unintentional weight loss.

A simple breath test is used to test for *H. pylori*. The test involves ingesting a small amount of a substance ( $C^{13}$ -urea) mixed with water and then breathing into foil bags.


The  $C^{13}$ -urea is broken down by *H. pylori*, so if an infection is present, the chemical will be detectable in breath.

## Are there any risks associated with your test?


There are no risks involved in performing the test, the chemical used is completely safe.

## What preparation is required for your test?



### For 4 weeks before your test

-  Do not take any antibiotics.
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### For 7 days before your test

-  **Do not take proton pump inhibitors (PPIs)**  
Losec, Nexium, lansoprazole, omeprazole, esomeprazole etc.






### For 2 days before your test

-  **Do not take promotility agents**  
(e.g. metoclopramide, domperidone etc)  
or opiates (e.g. codeine, tramadol, morphine etc).
  -  You can continue taking any other essential medicines.
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### For 6 hours before your test

-  **You must stop eating and drinking and fast for 6 hours before your test.**
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## The day of your test

-  You can have small sips of water (maximum of 300 ml) until the start of your test.
-  You may take your essential medicines with a small amount of water.
-  You may brush your teeth, but please try not to swallow any toothpaste.
-  Do not eat, drink, chew gum, smoke, eat breath mints and/or other sweets on the morning of or during of your test.
-  If you are diabetic requiring insulin or diabetes medicine, please ask your doctor if you should change your morning dose. Oral hypoglycaemic medicines are usually not taken that morning until completion of the test and you start eating again.

Key



Do




Do not




Additional info

## What happens during your test?

- 1 Your physiologist will explain your test to you, ask you questions about your symptoms and confirm that you have had nothing to eat in the 6 hours prior to your test.
- 2 You will be asked to give two baseline breath samples by blowing into two foil bags.
- 3 The test substrate  $C^{13}$ -urea will be mixed with water and given to you to drink.
- 4 Breath samples will then be collected, 2 after 10 minutes and 2 more after 30 minutes.

 **Your test will last 45 minutes.**

 You are free to return to your usual diet, medications and activity.

## How will I get my results?

Your results will be sent by secure email to both you and your referring consultant/doctor. We aim to send out all patient results within five working days of completion of your test.



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