

What is Urine Toxicology?

- A urine toxicology test is primarily a medical investigation, used to explore whether a patient's presentation could be due to the influence of substances.

What can it tell us?

- It can tell us if **certain substances** are present in the body **at the time** the sample is taken.
- Urine drug testing is part of a holistic approach to the care of the mother and unborn baby; a positive urine toxicology sample in pregnancy can help us understand risks to the baby's health, and to plan healthcare for both Mum and baby.

What are the limitations?

Urine toxicology tests performed by health services are not taken in a forensic manner;

- this means they are open to falsification, for example by someone providing a sample taken at a different time or even by a different person.

They only test for **specific requested** substances;

- there are numerous substances which can be misused which would not be detected (for example spice, ketamine, GHB, magic mushrooms, alcohol).

They will only detect substances which are present in the body at the time of the sample;

- some substances will remain detectable for a number of days after use, but others may only be present for a few hours.

The time taken to eliminate substances will differ from person to person (and within a patient)

- depending on concurrent illness, drugs or stage of pregnancy.

Substances have to be present at a minimum threshold to be detected by testing;

- **a negative result does not mean that a substance is completely absent**

So what is the bottom line?



A urine sample which is positive for a specific substance is a good indicator that someone has been exposed to that substance recently.



But a negative urine sample should not be seen as evidence that someone is free from drugs