Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

How To Test Your Urine pH While Getting Methotrexate

This resource will help you test the pH level of your urine (pee) at home while you're getting methotrexate (MEH-thoh-TREK-sayt). In this resource, the word "you" refers to you or your child.

About your urine pH level

Methotrexate can lower the pH level of your urine. Your pH levels range from 0 to 14.

The best pH level of your urine while you're taking methotrexate is 7 or higher. If your urine pH is too low for too long, it can damage your kidneys.

Your care team will test your urine pH level while you're in the hospital. If it's too low, they'll give you medicine or fluids to help raise it. This can help prevent long-term kidney damage. You'll get the medicine or fluid intravenously (into your vein, called an IV).

How to test your urine pH level at home

You will need to keep testing your urine pH level at home every time you urinate (pee). Your healthcare provider will tell you how long to do this.

Supplies

Your care team will give you supplies, or home care will send them to you. You'll need:

- A clean, dry urine container (also called a "hat" or urinal) to save your urine (see Figure 1).
- Plastic or paper pH strips (see Figure 2). Each type works the same way.
- Disposable medical gloves, especially if you're helping test someone else's urine.
- A clean, dry paper towel or disposable waterproof plastic pad.
- A trash can.

You can buy these supplies at your local drug store if you need more.



Figure 1. A hat urine container (left), urinal (center), and waterproof pad (right)

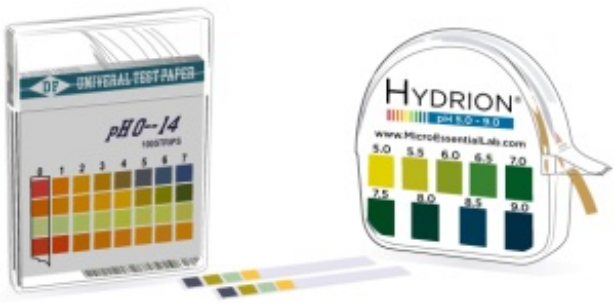


Figure 2. Plastic pH test strips (left) and paper pH test strips (right)

Instructions

1. Clean and dry your hands.
2. Set up your supplies on a clean, flat surface. If you have pre-cut pH test strips, take out 1 strip. For pH strips a roll, rip off a piece long enough to dip into the urine.
3. Pee into the clean, dry urine container. Do not test urine from the toilet bowl. The pH reading will be wrong.
4. Put on the gloves. Dip the end of your pH test strip into the urine. The test strip will change colors. If you're using a plastic test strip, make sure the whole pH square is in the urine.
5. Hold the test strip up to the pH indicator on the pH strip package or container. Compare the color of the pH strip to the indicator to find your urine pH level.
6. Write down your pH level and the time you did the test. You can use a pH log, notebook, or notes app on your phone.
7. Pour the rest of the urine in the urine container into the toilet, then flush.
8. Rinse the container with warm water. Let it dry before you use it again.
9. Wrap the used pH test strip in the paper towel or pad. Throw it away into the trash.
10. Wash your hands.
11. Store your unused pH strips in a cool, dry place until your next pH test.

What to do after getting your urine pH test results

If your urine pH is less than 7, you may need to take more medicine. This may be more of the same medicine, a different medicine, or both. Follow the instructions your healthcare provider gave you based on your urine pH level.

When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider if:

- You have been awake and have not been able to urinate for 4 hours.
- You have questions or concerns.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

How To Test Your Urine pH While Getting Methotrexate - Last updated on February 13, 2026
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