

# MSU test

Mid-stream specimen  
of urine

A thick green horizontal line that transitions into a stylized EKG (heart rate) waveform on the right side.

Urology Clinical  
Nurse Specialists

01935 384 394  
[yeovilhospital.nhs.uk](http://yeovilhospital.nhs.uk)

The logo for Yeovil Hospital Healthcare, featuring a stylized 'Y' inside a circle with a rainbow-colored border.

Yeovil Hospital  
Healthcare

## Why do I need to collect a mid-stream specimen of urine?

The aim is to get a specimen of urine from the middle of your bladder. Urine is normally sterile (no bacteria present). If bacteria are found in the specimen it means the urine is infected.

A 'mid-stream' specimen is best as the first bit of urine that you pass may be contaminated with bacteria from the skin.

If you are asked to do a mid-stream specimen of urine (MSU). It is important that you follow the correct procedure to ensure the test result is accurate.

## What is the purpose of an MSU test?

✓ **To check there is no infection present**

✓ **To confirm the diagnosis of a urine infection**

The usual symptoms for urine infection are pain when you pass urine, and passing urine frequently. However, symptoms are not always typical, particularly in children and the elderly, and urine test is needed.

✓ **To decide the best antibiotic to use**

Some bacteria (germs) are resistant to some antibiotics. If the test shows that bacteria are in the urine then the bacteria are tested against various antibiotics. This finds which antibiotics will kill the bacteria in the urine.

## Women

Hold open your labia (entrance to the vagina). Pass some urine into the toilet, then stop the flow. Then, pass some urine into the sterile bottle.

For best results, take the specimen after a bath or shower.

## Men

Ensure you wash around and pull back your foreskin. Pass some urine into the toilet, then stop the flow. Then, pass some urine into the sterile bottle.

Prior to doing the MSU, wash your hands and genitals.

Do not open the sterile bottle until you are ready to do a specimen. You do not need to fill the bottle to the top, a small amount will do.

Some specimen bottles contain a preservative. If this is the case, a mark on the bottle will indicate the ideal amount of urine. However, if that is difficult, any amount is better than none.

The sooner the sample is given in to the doctor's surgery, or to the 'lab' the better. Within two hours is best. If that is not possible, put the sample in the fridge until you can take it to the surgery or lab.

The results of an MSU take approximately two to three days.

## Useful numbers

**Urology Clinical Nurse Specialists**  
**01935 384 394**

**Yeovil Hospital main switchboard**  
**01935 475 122**

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**Ref: 18-17-114**  
**Review: 02/19**