

Disposable breath alcohol screening test

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Disposable breath alcohol screening tests are used for the detection of alcohol consumption.

The U-Test Alcohol Test provides a good indication of alcohol consumption and if the blood alcohol level of a person is above or below the legal driving limit. It picks up any trace of alcohol and provides an indication of above or below (approximately) 0,5g/liter of blood. It is for example approved for use by the French police.

Test principle

The disposable alcohol breath tester is a relatively simple device designed to show if one is above or below a defined Breath Alcohol Content (BrAC), in this instance, the legal driving limit. The U-Test Alcohol Test uses an internationally accepted breath testing principle to indicate the consumption of alcohol. The disposable tube contains white crystals that turn red in the presence of alcohol. When a measured volume of breath is passed through the tube (after inflating the bag), and the colour of the crystals change from white to red it indicates the presence of alcohol in the breath. If the colour change reaction is immediate (when reading the result), it indicates a breath alcohol level above the legal driving limit. If the reaction from white to red crystals takes a couple of minutes, it indicates the presence of alcohol, but at a level below the legal driving limit.

Test limitations

It is important to remember that the test is a breath *screening* device and that the result is only an indication of the blood alcohol concentration. Breath testing to establish a person's blood alcohol content relies on the fact that air in the deep lung region contains an alcohol concentration directly related to the alcohol concentration in the blood. The result obtained with this test does not provide an absolute measurement and cannot be used as evidence in a court of law. Road safety legislation requires a blood alcohol concentration test to be done.

U-Test Alcohol provides a good indication of the blood alcohol level when properly used. The accuracy of the test results may not be reliable if the test is not conducted according to the instructions. E.g. the instructions state "do not do the test within 10 minutes of the last drink". Why is this important? You can have alcohol in your saliva/ mouth or throat if the drink was recently consumed. The U-Test Alcohol tester will give incorrect results until the breath sample contains alcohol only from the lungs. So wait the 10 minutes and then test.

Test guidelines

- Do not do the test within 10 minutes of the last drink and do not smoke immediately before use.
- Do not use the test after the expiry date and do not re-use the test.
- It is normal for the crystals to get warm during operation.
- Do not immerse the test in any liquid.
- Dispose of the tube immediately after use. Do not carry the used tubes in your pocket.
- Handle with care; keep out of reach of children.

Are there any other substances that affect the test result?

Claims are often made after a test has shown to be positive, that something other than alcohol has recently been eaten or drunk which caused the tester to show positive.

Certain medicines do contain alcohol in small quantities – and it is possible that someone who has recently swallowed such medicine will show positive in a test, because the medicine is still fresh in his mouth and throat. The amount of alcohol contained in medicines is normally so small that it is unlikely to indicate positively after it has been absorbed by the body.

Similarly breath fresheners, chewing gum etc which may contain substances which react with the chemicals, are quickly dispelled from the mouth and not ingested into the system — so it is important not to test immediately after substances have been in the mouth. Allow some time to elapse before testing the breath for alcohol which comes from the lungs.

Alcohol elimination from the body

A commonly used rule of thumb by many is that the body “on average” eliminates approximately one “drink” per hour. This obviously differs from one individual to another and is generally also affected by the total amount consumed – as the liver itself slows down when presented with too much alcohol. It is therefore quite possible for a person tested sometime after consuming alcohol to show positive.

It is significant to note that legislation does not concern itself with when the alcohol was consumed or whether it came out of a beer bottle or a cough mixture bottle. It is about whether you have consumed alcohol and whether you are below or above the limit.

Benefits of disposable breath alcohol testers

- Accurate and reliable when used correctly.
- Indicate alcohol consumption and if above or below the driving limit.
- Inexpensive compared to other detection methods.
- Convenient as you can test yourself, anytime and anywhere.
- Easy storage – it is small and compact and fits easily into a trouser pocket, handbag or car.
- Hygienic – single use, disposable in general waste after use.
- Very easy to use.
- Rapid results.

- The bag supplied with the tester makes the test results more reliable as it contains the precise amount of breath to ensure correct results.
- No batteries, no calibration and no other accessories needed.
- No blood sample needed.