

## Saliva Drug Tests Explained

Recently there has been extensive research on the use of saliva in drug testing. A person's saliva has certain advantages and certain disadvantages when comparing the use of urine in testing for the presence of drugs. The most obvious advantage is simply that the collection procedure is easier and less prone to possible efforts to beat the drug test by substituting a clean drug test sample as is sometimes the case in urine drug testing. The ease at which a person's saliva can be tested make saliva drug tests less invasive than other forms of drug testing. The collection of saliva for saliva drug tests is easier and safer when compared to urine or blood.

It simply involves using a swab that looks very similar to a common toothbrush but in place of bristles a pad that serves, to collect the saliva in the mouth the pad is then placed between the lower cheek and gum for about two minutes. Once saturated with saliva the pad is then transferred to a collection vial. Many of the most commonly abused drugs can be detected in saliva including marijuana, THC, heroin, cocaine and amphetamines.

However there are disadvantages and those mostly relate to the short drug detection time limitation of saliva drug tests. Simply put saliva cannot be used to detect historical drug use.

Most drugs do not linger in saliva and disappear in anywhere from twelve to twenty four hours. Because of this, saliva testing is being considered for drug detection in situations where recent drug use must be detected including vehicle and equipment drivers, those involved in workplace or other accidents and not as a use to detect past drug use.

**What is saliva?** The actual medical definition of saliva is oral liquids produced by the many saliva glands in the human anatomy. The average adult produces in excess of one thousand milliliters of saliva on a daily basis.

**How reliable are saliva drug tests?** An extensive study by the University of Utah in Salt Lake City concludes that it is a reliable method for drug detection. The universities' Center for Human Toxicology concluded that drug use and drug concentrations can be determined by analyzing saliva.

Saliva drug tests are becoming more common in the workplace. Of the United States companies that drug test, twenty percent test both urine and hair and thirty percent test saliva.

**What are the telltale signs that employees may be using drugs?** There are many signs of possible drug abuse in the workplace. Employers should learn the signs that their employees may be using drugs. If you see more than one of these signs exhibited by an employee there is a chance that they are abusing drugs. Saliva drug tests can help you determine if any of these signs are real indicators of drug use.

Employees who are abusing drugs often have problems at work or behave differently than they had been previously.

Look for changes in attendance such as missed work, tardiness or requests to leave early or to have extra days off.

The employee's job performance may suffer so keep a close look at worker productivity and attention to detail. They may suddenly begin to miss deadlines and offer bizarre excuses to cover the deadlines that they missed. Often the employee may have personality changes or begin to dress differently or have a different attitude than usual. They may be subject to sudden or frequent outbreaks of anger. There may be increases in missing money or equipment from the workplace. You may receive complaints from co workers or customers about the employee's attitude, behavior or performance. They often begin to shy away from responsibility or try to shift responsibility to others. When things go wrong they often try and blame others. Drug testing in general and saliva drug tests in particular can help an employer find out if their workers are using drugs.

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