

Mid-Stream Urine (MSU) Sample Collection: Patient Instructions

Your doctor, nurse or healthcare professional has asked you to provide a mid-stream urine (MSU) sample. This test helps identify urinary tract infections (UTIs) and other abnormalities in the urine. Collecting the sample correctly reduces the risk of contamination and helps ensure accurate results.

Before you start

You will need:

- A sterile urine specimen container provided by your healthcare professional.
A specimen bag (if supplied).

Before collecting the sample:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.
- Clean the genital area with a clean moist wipe, or a clean washcloth with mild soap and water:
 - Women: Hold the labia apart and clean from front to back.
 - Men: Retract the foreskin (if present) and clean the tip of the penis.
- Do not open the sterile container until you are ready to collect the sample.
- Avoid touching the inside of the container or lid.

When to collect the sample

- The sample can usually be collected at any time of day unless advised otherwise.
- If possible, collecting the first urine passed in the morning may be recommended.

How to collect an MSU sample

1. Remove the lid from the sterile container, taking care not to touch the inside.
2. Begin passing urine into the toilet.
3. After 2-3 seconds have passed, collect a midstream sample by moving the sterile container into the stream of urine until it is one third to two thirds full.
4. Remove the container before your bladder is empty.
5. Finish passing the rest of the urine into the toilet.

Additional Guidance for Women

- Hold the labia apart while passing urine and collecting the sample.

Additional Guidance for Men

- Retract the foreskin (if present) while passing urine and collecting the sample.

After collecting the sample

1. Secure the lid tightly.
2. Wipe any spills with a clean tissue or paper towel.
3. Label the container with your full name, date of birth, and date and time of collection.
4. Place the container in the specimen bag provided.
5. Wash your hands thoroughly.

Returning the sample

- Return the sample to your GP surgery, clinic or laboratory as soon as possible, preferably within two hours of collection.
- If you cannot deliver it immediately, keep the sample refrigerated until it can be transported.
- Samples should ideally be returned on the same day they are collected.

Important points

- Collect the middle part of the urine stream, not the first part.
- Do not touch the inside of the container or lid.
- A small amount of urine is usually sufficient: the container does not need to be filled completely. One third to two thirds full is ideal.
- If you find it difficult to collect urine directly into the sterile container, you may use a very clean container and then transfer the urine to the sterile specimen bottle.