

Breath Test For Helicobacter Pylori

What is the *H. pylori* breath test?

The *H. pylori* breath test is a simple and safe test used to detect an active *H. pylori* infection.

What is *H. pylori*?

Helicobacter pylori (abbreviated as *H. pylori*) is a bacteria that can infect the stomach or duodenum (first part of the small intestine). If left untreated, *H. pylori* bacteria can cause gastritis (an inflammation or irritation of the stomach lining) and duodenal or gastric ulcers. In addition, infection with *H. pylori* increases the risk of other diseases and is also a risk factor for gastric cancer. Accurate detection of *H. pylori* is the first step toward curing stomach and intestinal ulcers, and preventing the development of more serious gastrointestinal problems.

What happens during the test?

During the test, you will be asked to exhale into a balloon-like bag. The air you breathe into this bag is tested to provide a basis for comparison (called a baseline sample). You will then be asked to drink a small amount of a pleasant lemon-flavored solution. Fifteen minutes after drinking the solution, a second breath sample will be taken. The air you breathe into this bag is tested for an increase in carbon dioxide.

Guidelines before the procedure

Special conditions

Be sure to tell your doctor if you are phenylketonuric.

Medications

- Two weeks before the test do not take any antibiotics or Pepto Bismol® (oral bismuth subsalicylate).
- Two weeks before the test do not take any prescription or over-the-counter proton pump inhibitors (Prilosec® [omeprazole], Prevacid® [lansoprazole], Protonix® [pantoprazole], Aciphex® [rabeprazole] or Nexium® [esomeprazole]). You may use over-the-counter antacids such as pepcid, zantac or tums instead.

Please note: Do not stop taking any other medicine without first talking with your doctor.

Eating and drinking

One hour before the test do not eat or drink anything (including water).

On the day of the procedure

A health care provider will explain the procedure in detail and answer any questions you might have. The procedure lasts about 20 to 30 minutes.

After the procedure

- Your breath samples are sent to the laboratory where they are tested.
- You may resume your normal activities.
- You may resume your normal diet and medicines (including prescription or over-the-counter proton pump inhibitors if instructed to do so) unless you have other tests that require dietary restrictions.

Test results

- Your doctor will notify you as soon as your laboratory test results are available.