

Hair Testing for Drugs of Abuse

Hair sample drug testing is a great way to detect whether or not a person has used drugs in the past 90 days. Whether in an office format or in the home, hair drug testing serves the purpose of answering questions about an individual's drug use history.

How Does Hair Follicle Drug Testing Work?

Hair drug testing is actually quite simple and merely requires a sample of hair in order to be completed. Employers and parents who are worried about their teen's use of drugs can collect a strand of hair from their pillow. Employers can request a sample from their employees. Once a hair sample has been collected, it is sealed in an envelope and sent to a participating laboratory for completion. Hair testing is fast and more accurate than other drug test forms.

For instance, hair sample drug testing can detect drug use for up to 90 days after use. The detection window is much larger in hair drug testing (compare it to about a week to 14 days for urine-based drug testing) because trace amounts of drug chemicals become trapped inside each hair. A simple lab test can detect these trace chemicals making for either a positive or negative test result. Once the results are recorded, you are sent notification of the results. Some companies even provide a phone service where you call in, enter an account number and retrieve the results in that way.

What Kinds of Drugs Can Hair Drug Testing Detect?

Hair sample drug testing can detect all of the major types of drugs. Custom "panels" (a panel is a test for a particular type of drug) can be requested. Hair follicle drug testing can detect the trace amounts of illicit substances trapped in the cortex of the hair for up to 90 days after use. A typical hair test includes the typical 5-Panel test established by the US Department of Transportation, including marijuana, opiates, methamphetamines, PCP, ecstasy, and cocaine.

Employee drug testing programs often incorporate hair follicle drug testing into their plans because of the sheer accuracy of these tests. Even though hair testing is more expensive than a urine drug test kit, for example, they can provide a level of accuracy that is nearly ten times that of other testing methods. Likewise, hair follicle drug testing does not involve the embarrassing collection of bodily fluid samples like that of a urine drug test. In most cases, a few strands of hair is all that is needed to obtain accurate results.

Hair testing is discrete and confidential. Samples and results are treated in the same manner as other drug tests, with a chain of custody and confidential process.

Collection of Hair Samples

Trained and unbiased certified collectors use detailed procedures to collect a hair sample of approximately 90-120 hairs. The hairs are cut in a manner that does not affect the appearance, and is very unobtrusive. The applicant can go to any one of thousands of collection centers. A center can be located by accessing the drug testing page at alliance2020.com and specifying a hair test in the lookup criteria.