

Forward

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Rick Garcia

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INTRODUCTION:

If you are applying for a job, chances are you will need to take a drug test. There are a few industries where drug testing is not yet the standard: Restaurants, day cares, some retailers, some labor jobs. But if the company you are looking to work for has a government contract, you can bet your bottom dollar that you probably will be tested; if not pre-employment, then at some point during your tenure with that company.

The good news is that they are only testing for illegal drugs during a drug test. They cannot, by law, test for pregnancy or medical conditions during a drug test. They are testing FOR illegal substances. They cannot run your urine, hair, saliva or blood through a machine and see what all you have been doing for the past 10 years. That not only is not allowed, it is impossible. The Department of Defense requires frequent, observed tests of its military personnel, as does parole/probation officers. Employment tests however are rarely observed.

If you don't want to caught with a positive result on your next drug test, this text will help you. If you are well known, this text may protect your reputation. If you are going through a divorce and/or custody situation, this text might help you get what you want. If you are looking for that once-in-a-lifetime job opportunity, this text might just help you

get it. I strongly recommended that drug users (pot smokers in particular) read this as marijuana is the main focus of this publication.

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WHY ME?

Employer Based Testing

If you are applying for a job, on probation or incarcerated, you probably will be tested at some time in the very near future. Some of you who already have a job and have been employed at that job for many years might also suddenly be subject to a random or post accident drug & alcohol test.

Most employers are using drug tests to help reduce liability and insurance costs. If you have an accident at work, injure someone, and are found to be using banned substances while at work, your employer is liable. Your employer is liable for everything you do at work within reason, (if you go berserk and start shooting everyone in site with no prior indication of mental instability, your employer may not be liable). Also, the Federal Government passed what is known as the “Drug Free Workplace Act”. That means that if a business wants to win a government contract, they must have a comprehensive drug free workplace policy in place, and in force, prior to beginning work on any government contract. Some even require an annual drug test for any employees working on a government facility.

Random

Maybe you were chosen for a Random. How did your name come up? Well, to be chosen for a random test, all employee names (employee numbers, social security numbers, whatever) are entered into a random numbering computer program. (or done by hand, using a random numbering table). The employer sets the quantity of employees to be chosen. For example: If the employer has 1000 employees, and wants to test 20% per year, they would draw 200 names out and test them throughout the calendar year. Most of the time, the draw is made monthly, so the employer would select approximately 16 – 17 employees each month, test them during that month, then draw another 16 – 17 the next month. If your name or number came up, you are tested.

If you are drawn and tested say in July, your name (or number) is then put back in so you would have the possibility of being drawn in August or any subsequent month. Just because you are tested once, doesn't mean you can't be drawn again and again. The

probability of being drawn 2 or 3 months in succession is remote, but possible.

The Department of Transportation requires those employees who are in a Safety Sensitive Position be tested at the annual rate of 50%. That means that everyone working in a DOT regulated job will be tested (on average) once every other year.

Safety Sensitive Position:

Operators of Commercial Motor Vehicles over 26,000 lbs GVW inclusive of a towed unit with GVW of 10,000 lbs,

1. -or has a GVW rating of more than 26,000 lbs
2. -or is designed to transport 16 or more passengers including the driver,
3. -or is of any size and is used to transport hazardous materials in quantities requiring placards under the Hazardous Materials Regulations (49 CFR, Part 172, Subpart F).

Operators, maintenance or emergency workers of pressurized or flammable pipeline. Aircraft pilots, mechanics and flight crew. Railroad engineers and conductors. Some specialized jobs within the Coast Guard. This includes Owner/Operators of semi-trucks. They must find a consortium of other drivers and enter their name for the possibility of being drawn for random controlled substances and alcohol testing.

Alcohol testing can only be conducted while the employee is currently doing; just prior to starting; or immediately after completing; a safety sensitive task. Controlled substances testing (drug test) can be done at any time. An employee can even be called in on his/her day off to be tested for controlled substances. Driving to and taking a controlled substances or alcohol test is considered “on duty” time, and is to be paid accordingly, and it also counts toward the “driving hours”. A driver cannot be tested if the time allowed for testing puts him/her over the allotted hours for driving.

For those of you not in a safety sensitive position, (bankers, cashiers, assembly line workers, laborers, etc...) you can be called for random testing while at work. Most non-DOT regulated employers do not test for alcohol, but some (about 10%) do. Alcohol is a legal drug, but you cannot be under the influence of alcohol while at work. Same principle applies to prescription medications and medical marijuana. Just because it is

legal for you to take a medication or substance, doesn't mean that your employer has to allow you to be under the influence of it on the job.

I once tested a truck driver, a random test (his number came up), with a prior on-the-job injury, covered by Workers' Compensation Insurance. He was taking Tylenol 3 with codeine for pain because he had broken bones. Tylenol 3 with codeine is a banned substance because it contains opiates. He was tested, found to be positive for opiates and sent home until he no longer needed the medication. He could not drive his truck until he healed enough that he could drive without pain medication other than an over-the-counter type of pain reliever. This driver had a legal right to take the drug, he just could not drive or work while taking it. The same applies for medical marijuana. You may have a recommendation from a doctor to smoke marijuana to relieve your pain or nausea, but your employer cannot allow you to perform a safety sensitive position and does not have to allow you on the job while under its influence.

Pre-Employment

Applying for a job is stressful in itself. Add the drug test, and if you are a regular or even an occasional marijuana user, the entire process can seem unbearable. The pre-employment drug test can take place at anytime; from the first interview to several weeks after you start work for a new company. The test can be conducted on site (at the employer's facility) or you could be sent to a "collection facility". Someone can be called in to perform the test, or the company may have a qualified person "in house" to conduct the test right then and there. The best defense for a pre-employment controlled substances test is the same for an alcohol test. Don't use an illegal substance before applying for a job. You are the one who controls this situation. You know which company you're applying to and when you will be submitting your application. You know you are applying for work, so it stands to reason you can control whether you are found positive or negative on a pre-employment drug test. It is simple. Don't use illegal substances before applying, and you will have absolutely no worries about a drug test.

If you apply to a company and begin work without being subjected to a pre-employment drug test, read the company literature very carefully. Ask around (discretely) to your co-

workers. Don't use an illegal substance until you know for sure whether or not the employer uses drug testing. Most employers will have employees sign a waiver acknowledging and agreeing to a drug test "on demand". Some employers who have you sign such a waiver, do not utilize drug testing at all. Some do. You need to do some investigating to find out for sure before using an illegal substance. It is always a good idea to ask for a copy of everything you sign before starting work, including your W-4 form for taxes, I-9 form for immigration, orientation paperwork, etc... Ask for a copy, take the paperwork home and take the time to really read through it. You don't have to tell the employer why you want a copy. Most employers will see that as being diligent and thorough – not bad traits for a new employee to possess.

Return-to-duty and Follow-up

If you were found positive on a previous controlled substance test (or found to have adulterated or substituted), you may be subject to one of these tests. The DOT requires a return-to-duty test be done after you have successfully completed a Substance Abuse Professional's (SAP) recommendation for treatment and/or counseling for failing a previous controlled substances test. These are required to be observed tests and you must receive a verified negative before being allowed to return to your safety sensitive position.

Follow-up tests are conducted after you have returned to your safety sensitive position. These tests are also observed. An employee working a safety sensitive position must have no less than 6 follow-up tests during the first year at an interval defined by the SAP. Follow-up tests can continue for up to 5 years after the return-to-duty test was completed.

Reasonable Suspicion

An employer, if they suspect you of being under the influence of banned substances while on the job, may conduct a reasonable suspicion test. Based on documented behavior, smell or activity, the employer can choose to have an employee tested while on the job. Usually these tests are conducted on the job site, during the work shift.

For example: I was called to an employers facility for an employee who was suspected of being under the influence of alcohol. The call came at the beginning of his shift - 11:00 pm. I arrived at about 11:30 pm and tested the employee using an evidential breathalyzer. The employee was found to be over 0.23 BAC, almost 3 times the legal limit for driving. The employer fired the employee, took his car keys from him and called a cab to take the employee home. The employee came back the following day ranting and raving about how he was going to sue the employer and had his lawyer on the phone, bla, bla, bla. Bottom line, an evidential breath test or confirmed drug test is defensible for an employer in court if done properly. You can fight it, but you probably won't win. You will only succeed in spending your money and time.

Bottom line: Don't show up for work stoned, drunk or under the influence of any other banned substance.

Annual

These tests are done strictly to comply with government or association guidelines and regulations. Some trade associations like skilled labor unions, trade consortiums or government entities require an employer to give all employees working certain jobs a drug test annually. For instance, on your anniversary date with the Millwrights Union, you are required each year to have a negative drug test. You must carry a card while at certain jobs identifying your anniversary date of the test and the fact that you tested negative.

Post-Accident or Near Miss

Having an accident at work is stressful, especially if someone is hurt as a result of the accident. All of a sudden, you are subject to drug and/or alcohol testing. This is done for a couple of reasons:

1. To reduce the possibility of a similar incident occurring by eliminating illegal or banned substance use as a cause.
2. To reduce the company liability for a medical claims incident.

If you are involved in an accident and you have a medical claim with a workers'

compensation insurance carrier, and you are found to be positive for a controlled substance or alcohol on a test, the employer may not be liable for your injury. The burden of proof then shifts to you to prove that the banned substance or alcohol use did not contribute in any way to the cause of the accident.

For example: Say you were hit by a fork lift in a warehouse where you are employed as a laborer. You filed a medical claim for your broken leg and also filed a claim for lost wages. Your employer conducted a drug or alcohol test on you and you were found positive for THC. Workers' Compensation Insurance might pay for the medical bills, but probably will not pay for your claim for lost wages, and the company's experience rating will not be charged with the accident. That means that the company's insurance rates will not be affected by your accident because it is assumed to be your fault. That is, unless you can prove that you would have been hit by that fork lift whether you use pot or not. You must be able to prove that the use of marijuana did not cause you to lose concentration on your surroundings; cause you to fail to hear the approaching fork lift; and did not affect your reflexes making you unable to avoid being hit by the fork lift. That is a pretty hard thing to prove.

FYI: An employer cannot take urine from an unconscious individual. You must be able to give consent or refuse a test as you see fit. Even if you are catheterized, a medical professional cannot take urine from you while you are unconscious or if you do not give permission. Just keep in mind that a refusal to submit to a drug test is considered a positive drug test.

Probation or Parole

Almost everyone who has been arrested and/or convicted of a drug offense and placed on probation or parole will be regularly drug tested. Even some of you who were arrested and/or convicted of an offense not related to illegal substances may be subjected to regular drug tests while on probation or parole.

These tests are almost always observed or at least monitored and usually given by your parole/probation officer during your weekly or monthly visits. The good thing is; because

they are regular, you have a good idea when they will be done. You also have the ability to control the outcome of these tests. Don't use illegal substances while on probation or parole and you will have no worries what-so-ever about failing a drug test. Not smoking at home is much, much better than not smoking in jail.

WHERE DO I GO?

Locations

There are many places where you can be tested. Employers use collection facilities, or test on site using a service company or another employee trained in drug testing. You may be asked to travel to a collection facility by yourself or the employer may escort you to a facility, it all depends on the reason for the test. Probation or parole officers usually conduct the testing themselves at their office or where ever your regularly scheduled meeting takes place.

Employment – off site

For pre-employment, random, return-to-duty or follow-up testing, you could be tested either at the employers facility or sent to a hospital, medical clinic or collection facility. If you are sent to a collection facility for pre-employment, you probably will not be accompanied by an employer representative. You will be given a company Custody and Control Form (CCF), told where and when to show up. Some employers even allow you to contact the collection facility to make an appointment at your convenience, but most will make the appointment for you. Don't be late or miss an appointment. Collection facilities usually wait 15 – 20 minutes, then call the employer and report you as a “no-show”. If you are reported to the employer as a no-show, you will need to make arrangements through the employer to reschedule the test. This does not make you look good to your prospective employer. If you cannot even get to a drug test appointment on time, how are you going to report for work on time day after day?

For random, reasonable suspicion return-to-duty or follow-up testing, you will probably be accompanied by a Designated Employer Representative (DER). This person is with you to make sure you do not pick up a substitution or adulteration material along the way to the collection facility.

For post-accident or near miss testing, the likelihood of being accompanied to the testing

facility is much higher. For one thing, if you are hurt and need medical attention, your supervisor or company DER probably drove you to the hospital or acute care clinic. While there, they may instruct the medical personnel to get a specimen for a drug test. The supervisor or company DER will probably have a CCF in their possession before you leave for the medical facility. It is almost impossible to alter the outcome of this test. There is no opportunity to purchase or pick up a substitution or drink extra fluids enroute to the medical facility. This is one instance where you would actually want to remain unconscious for up to 30 days. That way, they could not take a specimen until you are cognitive and aware of what you are doing. It is against regulations to take a specimen for drug testing from an unconscious person, even from a catheter. You must be given the opportunity to give consent or refuse. (Refusing to submit to a drug test will result in a positive drug test result). You also must be able to sign the CCF, whether you consent or refuse, you still need to be able to sign.

Employment – on site

Your company may have someone on staff who conducts drug testing right there at your employer's facility. Or, they use a company who sends a collector to your employer's facility for the purpose of collecting drug test specimens.

For pre-employment, the employer may decide during the interview that you would be the one that is perfect to fill his open position. He/she then calls the person who handles the drug testing for the company to come and give you a drug test right then. Or has made arrangements to have a service agent on site at a certain time to test the winning candidate.

You may have been given a "conditional offer of employment". This means, that if you pass your drug test and/or background verifications, the job will be yours and you should start on a specific date. In a case such as this, usually you have a date for orientation already established. Your test could be done on that day, at the beginning of your orientation. Someone will come and take you aside from the orientation and give you a drug test. Usually, testing in this instance is done using an instant type of test. That way,

they company will know right away if they want to waste time on completing the orientation and training. Most of the time, the employer will forward a non-negative screening result from an instant test to a laboratory for confirmation. This confirmation will establish if any substances causing the non-negative result on the instant test is from a legal drug such as a prescription or over-the-counter or if the non-negative result is from an illegally taken substance.

If you have been hired, have worked for up to 2-3 weeks and have not yet been tested, then the odds that your company does not conduct pre-employment drug tests are very good. A good rule of thumb to go by is: Wait until you receive your first paycheck before using illegal substances. You could still be given a pre-employment test after you receive your first paycheck, but it is unlikely that a company will wait that long to test. After that time, they have invested too much time and money in your training to dismiss you for a failed pre-employment test.

Some random tests are done right at the jobsite. If you work on an oil rig, construction site, manufacturing facility, assembly plant, bank, etc, a service agent might just come and pull you right off your job for a random test. Also, if your supervisor suspects you of being under the influence of alcohol or banned substances while on the job, they may conduct a reasonable suspicion test. In the event of a reasonable suspicion test, you would be pulled off your job or task immediately and asked to sit in a room with a supervisor watching you at all times. A service provider would be called in to do either an alcohol test, a drug test or both. You would have virtually no opportunity to substitute, adulterate or dilute a drug test because you would not be left alone until after the collection or test is complete.

FYI: If you are told you have been suspected of using on the job and are subject to a reasonable suspicion drug or alcohol test, you can ask for documentation of your observed behavior. The employer must give you a copy of the documented behavior, maybe not right then, depending on your level of intoxication, but if you request it, they should be able to provide the documentation showing exactly what behavior, smell,

activity, etc. was observed to lead them to believe you are under the influence of a banned substance.

Parole or probation

This drug test is usually conducted using a cheap instant test at the PO's office or the donor's home; wherever the regular appointment is conducted. These tests are usually monitored, but not observed. That means the PO is in the room, but usually does not do a true "observation" where he/she watches the urine flow from the body into the collection cup. They are just in the room or outside an open door.

OK, I'M READY

Now That It's time, What Can I Expect?

Employer, Off-site

Upon first entering a collection facility for a pre-employment test, if you aren't accompanied by an employer representative, you will be asked for your identification. If you don't have any, you don't get a test. Simple as that. You will be asked to leave. No test, no job. Your prospective employer will be called and told that you could not conduct the test because the presumed donor had no identification. You will need a piece of Government issued photo identification. (i.e.: Drivers License, Military ID Card, State issued ID card, Passport, you get the idea).

Once your ID is checked and it is determined that you have not sent your brother-in-law's best friend in to test for you, you will be asked your Social Security Number. If you prefer, you could use your Driver's license number, but since it is a Pre-employment test, your prospective employer only has your SSN on an application to identify you with. They also use your name on the CCF, but the SSN is the big identifier.

Urine

You may be asked to wash your hands. This is to ensure there is no adulterant on your hands like bleach under the fingernails. You will be asked to empty your pockets and remove all outer clothing such as jackets, extra sweatshirts, hats, scarves, gloves, etc. You cannot be made to put on a gown for the purpose of urine collection. If you are there to also have an employer based physical, then you will need to put on a gown. The collector will ask you to remove all things from your pockets. I mean everything including your cell phone, car keys, change, pocket knives, lighters tobacco containers, machetes, guns, lip stick, eye drops, coin purse, pot, pipe, pens, lint, wallet and your lucky rabbits foot. You will be allowed to keep the items that cannot be used as an adulterant or weapon. The remaining items will be put in a locked cabinet. You should have the key to the cabinet or safe in which your purse or other valuable are placed.

You cannot be “frisked”, although the collector may ask about any obvious lumps in clothing like objects left in pockets, things attached to belts, etc.

You will then be taken to the restroom, where you will be instructed in how to give a specimen. The collection kit must be factory sealed and opened in front of you. The instructions are:

Please shut the door, urinate into the collection cup at least 1 inch deep to ½ cup full (this may vary depending on the collector). Please set the cup on the counter and open the door when you are finished. Do not run the faucet (it should be disabled) or flush the toilet. Any extra urine should be put inside the toilet.

For females, add: You may use toilet paper as you normally would. Just don’t flush the toilet. It doesn’t matter if you are menstruating, or get blood in the cup, we will just make a note on the CCF stating that you claim to be menstruating, accounting for the reddish color in the urine.

Then, after you have filled the cup to the desired depth and opened the door, the collector then checks the temperature of the urine. There is a small temperature strip stuck to the outside of the collection cup about ¼” from the bottom of the cup. The temperature needs to read between 90 – 100 degrees when read within 4 minutes of the void (peeing in the cup).

Laboratory test

The collector will then pour the urine in one or two vials, depending on whether the employer has arranged for a single or split collection. Seals from the CCF are then put over the vial(s), dated by the collector and initialed by you AFTER THEY ARE PUT ON THE VIAL. This proves that you were present when the urine was poured into the vial. Do not initial the seal while it is still attached to the CCF. The collector will sign the CCF and note the time of the collection. Also, the temperature box should be checked at this time if the collector did not do it right away after checking the

temperature. Then you will be asked to sign and date the CCF. The top copy of the CCF will be inserted into the shipping bag with the specimen and the bag will be sealed. You should be present when the bag is sealed. The collector will then give you the last copy (usually the green copy) of the CCF. Keep it. It is your proof that the temp was checked or not, that you actually took a test and has the specimen number on it. It also has the MRO listed at the top right hand corner.

After giving you your copy of the CCF, the collector should inform you that if you are taking any prescription or over-the-counter medications to list them on YOUR COPY of the CCF. Be sure to list the substance taken, dosage, time last taken, prescription number (listed on the bottle) and any prescribing physician name and number. If a banned substance is found in your specimen, the MRO at the top right hand corner of the CCF should call you to determine if any substance found, is in your system legally or illegally. The MRO will determine this by reading the laboratory report and listening to what you are saying. If you say you are taking a prescription for adderal, for example, and the lab report shows positive for cocaine, you are in trouble. If the lab report shows positive for adderal, and you have a prescription for adderal, your urine should show the amount consistent with your prescribed dosage. The MRO may also call your prescribing physician to ensure that the medication was actually prescribed to you and not your babysitter.

After all that, you will be allowed to collect your things and go.

Instant Test

Your collector has now become the screener. The urine will be tested using an instant type of test. The kind you purchase in a drug store are a bit outdated for collection facilities. Collection Facilities now use a “integrated Split Cup” either with, or without an “adulteration panel”. This is a device you pee into, set onto the counter and open the door. The screener then places the lid on the container and peels back label covering the test panel. If it is a split cup, a small amount of urine is allowed to flow past a test chamber while most of the urine is uncontaminated by the test pad for forwarding to a lab for confirmation testing if necessary. The screener then “reads” the test panel. There

should be two reddish lines appearing in the space provided for each drug. One is a control line. This means the device is working correctly for each corresponding drug. The second line is the test line. Even a faint line means negative on an instant drug test. If there is a faint line present on the test panel, and the screener wants to forward to a lab for confirmation, don't worry. It should come back as negative. I have never had a questionable (is there a line or isn't there a line) test sent for confirmation come back as positive. The line must NOT be there at all to be positive for that corresponding drug.

If negative, your screener should note on the CCF that the temperature was good and that the specimen screened negative for whatever substance(s) were tested for. You should be given a copy of the CCF used for the instant test (also the last, or green copy), you should be given your personal items and allowed to leave the collection facility.

If Non-negative (a screened specimen cannot be called a positive drug test until a confirmation test is done), the screener should prepare the specimen for shipping to a laboratory and all other instructions and procedures are the same as for a lab test.

Hair

From the identification phase, you will assist the collector to fill in the personal information for the CCF. If you have enough hair on your head, the collector will then cup a small sample of your hair close to the scalp, at the crown of the head (the part of the head touching the pillow when lying on your back). The quantity should equal about 3/16 diameter when held together, ponytail fashion. If the hair is shorter than 1-1/2 inches long, then a higher quantity should be taken to make up for the shorter length. The hair is laid on a piece of foil, with the scalp end of the hair towards the beveled side of the foil. The foil is then folded, trapping the hair in place. If the hair is short or excessively curly, then the hair is just laid on the foil without concern for the scalp end towards the beveled side of the foil. The foil is then placed in an envelope, the collector will fill the info, have you initial and sign where needed, and seal the envelope as required. You are required to witness the sealing of the hair in the envelope

for shipping.

If there is not enough hair on the head, it is too short or would leave a visible blemish in the hairstyle of the donor, then body hair or facial hair is allowed. It is preferred to take chest hair first, then leg hair, arm or armpit hair, back hair, facial hair and finally pubic hair, in that order. The location of the body the hair was taken from must be noted on the CCF. You, as the donor will receive the “donor copy” of the CCF.

Make sure the collector’s scissors are clean. There is an alcohol wipe included in each hair collection kit for just this purpose. The scissors must be wiped down with the alcohol pad before cutting your hair. Facial hair must be taken as a last resort, and only if it doesn’t leave a noticeable mark in the moustache or beard. Ear and nose hair are not acceptable.

Saliva

The same ID process as for urine and hair. The collector will present the donor with a factory sealed collection kit and open it in front of the donor. The donor will then be asked if he/she has had anything to eat or drink in the ½ hour prior to arriving at the collection facility. If not, then the swab is inserted into the mouth and the donor is asked to keep it under the tongue for 4 minutes. Sometimes the collector will rub the test swab around in the donor’s mouth for an entire 4 minutes. If the test is instant, the swab will be inserted into the test kit and the results are read right away. Two lines are negative, no line at the test level is non-negative. If the test is a laboratory test, the swab is inserted into the vial, the excess length of the swab stem is broken off and the vial is sealed using the seal on the CCF. You are asked to sign and given a copy of the CCF.

Blood

Same as saliva, except a technician will draw blood. The blood will be drawn into two vials or one depending on whether the specimen was split or not. There is no instant testing for blood that I am aware of.

THE WAIT

When Will I Know If I Passed?

Negative

If you were given an instant test, you should know right away if the results were negative. If you took a test that needed to be sent to a laboratory, it can take anywhere from 24 – 72 hours just to complete the laboratory process. For all DOT regulated tests and most non-regulated tests, a MRO must review each and every test, including negative tests. The MRO must ensure that the collection and laboratory processes were done correctly and that there was nothing unusual either in the urine or with the collection and laboratory procedures or results.

That doesn't mean you will know in 24 – 72 hours. That means your employer, prospective employer or court appointed official will know that you are negative in 24 – 72 hours. You may never find out. You probably will never hear of this test again, let alone be advised of a negative result.

For pre-employment tests, if you get the job, you probably received a negative on the drug test. It may take several weeks for the employer to finally get around to calling you in for orientation. For random tests, if you keep your job and/or your employer is not offering you brochures of rehabilitation facilities, you probably received a negative on the drug test. For court ordered testing (parole/probation), for sure you won't hear of any negative results. You will, however; stay out of jail.

There will be no party, ticker-tape parade, offers of congratulations, no one will even slap you on the back and say, "Way to go!" It is expected that you will pass a drug test. It is assumed that you know you will pass and are not the least bit concerned or curious about the results. Calling the employer and asking, "Hey man, do you know if I passed or not yet?" That will just tip the employer off that you have no clue whether you can pass a drug test or not.

Positive

First of all, the wait will seem like it goes on forever. The specimen will travel via overnight courier to the laboratory. The Lab will take most of the following day to give the initial screening. If the initial screening shows a non-negative, then the specimen needs to go through the GC/MS confirmation process. This can take up to another 72 hours. Then, the results are forwarded to an MRO for review.

The MRO will try to get in contact with you, the donor, for up to 3 – 10 days. The length of time the MRO tries to contact the donor is set by the employer. Most of the time it is no longer than 3 days. The MRO may contact the employer in an attempt (for any test other than pre-employment) to make contact with the donor. The MRO calls the employer, who then puts the MRO on hold. The supervisor then gets you off the job and has you talk with the MRO right then and there. Whatever the MRO asks you, you should answer honestly. Lying to a MRO at this point in the game does absolutely no good. The MRO is looking at your urine results. He/she knows if you have adulterated, attempted to substitute or taken a banned substance. He/she also knows what you have taken or used to adulterate the urine with, you see, the GC/MS will let him know. The MRO wants to know if you know what is in the urine and if it is supposed to be in there.

For example: A 65 year old bus driver takes a random drug test. The specimen takes 5 business days to complete the laboratory process. The MRO leaves a message on the Bus Driver's answer machine to return his/her call. The MRO then calls me, the C/TPA to tell me to contact the employer to have the bus driver call him. I give the bus driver the MRO number (the Bus Driver was at work and hadn't gotten the voice mail yet), the driver calls the MRO. The MRO then calls me to report that the driver is negative.

Of course I ask the MRO what the fuss was all about. Keep in mind that the MRO is not really supposed to say anything to me, the C/TPA or the Employer other than the employee tested negative for banned substances. However; he did share with me the reason. Apparently the Bus Driver has a prescription for adderal. He needed to verify that

the prescription actually belonged to this bus driver. The Bus Driver had to give the prescription number found on the bottle. The MRO then called the pharmacy or prescribing physician to verify.

All this takes time, and if negative, your employer will simply put the result in your file and not think twice about it. If found to be adulterated (by adding a foreign substance to the specimen), substituted (by not having the correct temperature or allowing a collector to see substitution materials) or positive for a banned substance illegally in your system, you may never hear of the results from the employer if this is a pre-employment test. It is like when you apply, and they choose someone else, they don't always call all the applicants and inform them that they were passed over for the job. Same for the drug test. The drug test is part of the application process. If you don't pass, you don't get the job. The employer is under no obligation to waste his time by calling you to tell you of a failed drug test.

Most results are transmitted to the employer from the TPA or MRO via fax or internet. The employer might take a couple of days to download the information. It just depends on the employer's workload that week and his immediate need to hire new employees. Not just anyone at a company can receive the results. The results of any drug test, positive or negative, can be only transmitted to the company DER. If that person is on vacation, and the alternate DER is too busy to mess with hiring until the main DER gets back from his/her vacation, well that might just add another week or two to the wait.

Avoiding the call from the MRO is not a good idea. You are wasting everyone's time. Everyone is paid per test, from the collector to the lab, to the MRO. By making everyone wait for their money and work harder to complete the test, you aren't making any friends in the MRO or C/TPA's offices, let alone the employer who may also be waiting for results.

For example: You applied at XYZ Corporation. The Human Resource Director conducted your interview and decided you would be the perfect person to fill the open position in

the graphics design department. You indicated in the interview that you could start immediately. Well, if you could start work immediately, why now are you suddenly unavailable when the MRO tries to contact you? You see, the employer may need to get a position filled ASAP. Delaying the results only frustrates the employer and draws unwanted attention to your drug test.

On the other hand, if your test was a random, return-to-duty, follow-up, post accident/near miss or court ordered test, delaying results by avoiding the MRO could get you a few more days of employment or freedom, depending on your situation.

OOPS!!!

What Did I Do Wrong?

The most important thing you need to bring with you to a drug test is your identification. You will need a government issue photo identification. That means a driving license, State issued ID card, passport, military ID card, etc. A library card, credit card, social security card will not do.

Some horror stories

Cold Specimen

I show up at a safety meeting with names drawn for a random test on a list. James says he really needs to use the bathroom because he has diarrhea. He goes in and comes out a few minutes later. In the meantime, I'm conducting the breath alcohol tests and urine collections on others who were drawn. Johnnie's name comes up and he fills his paperwork, takes his cup and goes into the restroom. He comes out a couple minutes later, hands the cup to me, ½ full as instructed. He looks a bit nervous, but not too bad. When I look at the temperature strip on the cup, I don't see anything registered. That is very unusual, so I pick up the cup to get better light. Well, the cup was cold. I don't mean cool, I mean like it had ice water in it. I looked at James and said, "this is cold". He says "What?" I repeat, "this is cold". He says (with a very serious, straight face), "Well, I just drank a milkshake". I just had him complete the paperwork, sign the form and hand him his copy. He doesn't notice that I wrote in the remarks section: Collection cup containing urine is cold to the touch and registers no temperature. Collection 1 of 2.

Johnnie ended up waiting for 2 more hours to pass and drank 30 ounces more water so he could give me another specimen, this time observed (with the observer watching the urine flow from his body into the collection cup). I am required to send in the cold specimen and the second, observed specimen. So, after James gives me the second specimen and I write why the second collection was done under observation, send in two separate voids and James has signed that he provided both specimens, the lab tests both. When one had THC present and the other did not, it was a pretty good tip-off that James was busted for

substituting one specimen and caught for being positive for the other.

Johnnie lost his job and had to see a Substance Abuse Professional for an evaluation and treatment program before he could work in his field again, for any employer.

Bullied Into Testing Too Soon

I get a call that an Owner/Operator needs to join a consortium, have a test on file have a program written for his company, and random testing done; asap. When I talk to him on the phone, he is strange, talking about all kinds of paranoid ideas. Anyway, he agrees to come into my facility the next day to take a drug test (DOT). He comes in the next day, Takes the training I offer him, the program I wrote for him, and the drug test. He doesn't pay right away, saying something about forgetting his checkbook. I am ready to write off the expense that I am out and prepared to never hear from this person again.

Couple of days later, I get a check in the mail for the full amount. The drug test has not cleared the laboratory yet. One full week later, the test still has not cleared the laboratory, so I call and ask what the problem is. The lab tech says that they needed to run the confirmation process twice on this specimen, but won't tell me the exact nature of the problem. 2-3 days later, I get a call from the MRO. He needs to speak to the Donor. I call the Donor, leave a message on his phone that he should call my office as soon as possible. About an hour later, the Donor calls me. I tell him to call the MRO. He does. About ten minutes later, the MRO calls me and tells me that the Donor is positive for Amphetamines (Meth).

Now the Donor must attend a Substance Abuse Professional's evaluation, attend the recommended treatment, go through the re-evaluation, return-to-duty testing and follow-up testing for up to 5 years. Why? Because the Donor was intimidated by the DOT inspector into taking a drug test when he knew he could not pass. If the Donor had waited about a week and then taken the test (assuming the Donor stopped using drugs for that week), he would have passed, no problem.

The consequences of an Owner/Operator continuing to operate a commercial motor vehicle with a failed drug test is that if the Owner/Operator is again audited and found to be operating while disqualified, the company (Owner) is subject to a \$2,000 fine for allowing the driver (Operator) to drive the CMV. His company will be disqualified and the DOT number will be suspended or revoked. Since this particular operator lives and works very near the State line, he cannot cross into the neighboring state to conduct business with a revoked DOT number. It effectively puts the Owner/Operator out of business.

No Identification

This one is simple: No ID, no test. If this is for a pre-employment, you won't get the job. I will send you away, I don't care what the excuse is. Saying that you "lost your license" and haven't gotten to the DMV to have it replaced is no good. I just send you to the DMV and tell you to call the employer and beg for mercy and a re-scheduled test date.

One young man came in to my facility and said he didn't have any identification at all. He had lost his wallet and had nothing left. It was 3:45 pm on Friday. The DMV will not accept anyone after 4:00 pm. He had only 15 minutes to get across town, and get his license replaced. It is a good thing we are in a relatively small city and the DMV wait is not what it is in, say, California. He did manage to get the license replaced and managed to get back to my facility to "donate" before the 4:30 cutoff for overnight courier service for that day. Since we do not have overnight courier service over weekends, this kid almost missed having his specimen tested by a laboratory for another 3-4 days. That could have disqualified him from the position if the employer wanted to hire right away.

Remember, always bring a Government issued, unexpired photo identification with you to any testing facility. That could be a State issued ID card, State driver's license, Passport, military identification or any other form of photo ID. Also, to avoid any delays, if you have lost or gained several pounds, dyed or drastically changed your hair style, grown a full beard, etc., since your photo was taken, go and get the identification updated. For your photo identification to be used for identification purposes, the photo

must actually look like you.

Excuses, excuses, excuses

None of the following will work while trying to “fool” the MRO into thinking you aren’t really positive:

1. I was at a party where they were smoking, but I didn’t smoke any pot.
2. I didn’t inhale.
3. I didn’t know that the cookies, brownies, butter, whatever, contained marijuana.
4. I have a medical marijuana “permit”.
5. I only took one or two of my wife’s pain pills for my headache.
6. My prescription wasn’t cutting it, so I doubled the dose.
7. I ate too many poppy seeds.
8. Someone spiked my drink
9. No way in hell!!!! I don’t do drugs at all!!!! The lab must have screwed up!!!! I’m going to sue!!! (you get the idea).
10. ...but I don’t smoke pot any more, I quit a couple of weeks ago.

None of the following will work while trying to “fool” the Collector into thinking that you aren’t attempting to adulterate, dilute or substitute a test:

1. It is cold because I just drank a milkshake.
2. I really need to keep my purse with me.
3. Can my friend come in with me?
4. I need to run out to my car for something.
5. I just need to get something from my friend.
6. Can’t I come back tomorrow or later today?
7. That is all I have in my pockets (“oh yea?” “Is that something in your pocket or are you just really happy to be here?”).
8. Not using toilet paper (females).
9. After making urination sounds, walking around in the bathroom and waiting an excessively long time to open the door.
10. Dancing when you arrive, and your specimen looks completely clear.

The following will only succeed in pissing off the Collector:

1. Do you really like your job?
2. How can you do this day after day?
3. This is violating my rights.
4. Don't you trust me?
5. This is really gross.
6. I would never take a job like this.
7. Man, what a bitch (muttered under the breath; not meant for me to hear).
8. This is really stupid.
9. I'm in a huge hurry, can I leave now? (I'll let you leave when we are done)
10. Pissing all over the bathroom and toilet.
11. Flushing the toilet after being told not to.
12. Pissing an inadequate amount in the cup then waiting to see if your bladder will find more urine to add with it. (If it didn't come out the first time, it ain't there).
13. Whining of any kind.
14. Can't I cut my own hair? (no)
15. Do you really have to cut the hair from the head? (yes, if it is available)
16. Pretending you don't understand the simple, thoroughly explained instructions.

Just pee in the cup, set the cup down and open the door for God's sake!!! It really isn't that hard, and if you don't agree with it, grosses you out or insults you, I don't really care. It is your choice to be there. If you don't want to pee in the cup then don't. You won't get the job, but no one is forcing you to pee in the damn cup, or donate your hair, or swab your mouth. Same thing for the probation/parole tests. You can always go to jail. No one is forcing you to take the drug test.

Waiting for the full 3 hours to pee in the cup also pisses us off. We are paid by the collection, not by the hour. If you think that I don't know when an employee is sucking up on the waiting time so he/she doesn't have to go back on the line, you are mistaken. While I must allow you the full 3 hours to produce a specimen, if you are pacing and

dancing from foot to foot, I know you need to pee. I will suggest that you “give it a try”. After about 1½ to 2 hours, you had better “give it a try” because we are getting really frustrated by your lack of cooperation.

TIPS TO A LESS STRESSFUL DRUG TEST

Identification

First and foremost: Bring your unexpired, government issue, photo identification. This can include a passport, driver's license, military identification or State issued identification card among some of the more popular identifications. If you do not have an UNEXPIRED, GOVERNMENT ISSUE, PHOTO IDENTIFICATION, we will not test you unless the employer's representative is standing right beside you. Period.

Saying "Oh, I don't have my ID, I left it at home", then getting into your car and driving away, looks really bad when I call the employer and tell them that they will need to reschedule the test for you. The employer knows you drive, you probably just said so in your latest interview. Now the employer is wondering why you don't have your license in your purse or wallet. That shows lack of personal responsibility. Not the first impression you are going for when trying to get a job.

This happens much more often than it should – at least 3-4 times each month. Don't leave home without it.

Cell phone

Nothing pisses us off more than talking incessantly on your cell phone while taking a drug test. What is more important to you; your friends or your employment situation? I am trying to work. This is my job. Put the damn phone down and turn it off. Show me some respect and I will make the test go smoothly. Give me grief and I can make you regret it.

Attire

I tested a girl for a major retailer. She showed up literally wearing her fuzzy pink slippers and her pajamas. She had neon pink hair and an attitude to match. She thought her shit didn't stink and made sure everyone around her knew it. I made sure her prospective (yes, this was a pre-employment test) employer knew it too. It isn't that I enjoy being a

“tattletale” or a “narc”, it is just that this is my job. Drug testing for a pre-employment test is part of the entire pre-employment process; along with the application, interviews, physical and orientation, there is drug testing. Just because it isn’t done at the employers facility doesn’t mean the employer isn’t taking part in the test.

Make sure you dress as you would for the job. If your employer expects you to wear jeans and a t-shirt, then wear one to the drug test or interview. Make sure they are clean and not torn though. Your t-shirt should not have an endorsement or a large photo on it. Just wear a plain shirt. If you are applying for a banking job, wear business casual attire. I think a tux or an evening gown is a bit much, but dress as you would for the job.

Friends

Leave them at home too. If you can’t interview and complete the pre-employment process by yourself, how in the world do you intend on getting through the workday alone? You may not see it this way, but guaranteed your prospective employer will. Besides, we can’t allow your friends in the testing area. At our facility, they must wait out in the hall. They aren’t even allowed in the waiting area.

1. This isn’t social hour.
2. We don’t have enough room to accommodate all your friends.
3. I can’t ensure the integrity of the testing area if you have one or two friends with substitution’s or adulterants on them. I can’t search them or ask them to give up their possessions as I can with you, so I can’t let them into the testing area.
4. I need to keep testing as private as possible to protect your privacy and the privacy of others in the testing facility. If someone else is waiting to pee and you bring in all your friends to stare at him/her and know his/her business it isn’t fair or ethical to that other person.

Listen

Just listen to the collector give the instructions. IF you have questions, ask them. I once gave a drug test to a guy. Here were the instructions:

This is a factory sealed cup. (I show the seal, then open the cup and dump out the contents). I need you to fill the cup to here (I point to a line on the cup about 15 ml more than what I need). I cannot do with less than here (I point to the line corresponding to the exact milliliters that I need) I prefer ½ cup if you've got it. Set the cup in the tray and open the door (I have a plastic tray about 10 inches in diameter that I want the cup set into to contain any drips). You can put any extra in the toilet. You cannot flush the toilet or run the water.

(For women I add in the instructions: You can use the toilet in your normal manner; using toilet paper and everything. You just cannot flush the toilet or run the water.)

The stupid guy never asked questions, he just said “ok”. I closed the door and waited. He flushed the toilet and opened the door. Just as I am about to say again: DO NOT FLUSH THE TOILET, I realize he is trying to hold both his full cup and the flimsy plastic tray full of urine. He ends up spilling the tray of urine all over the counter, floor and the roll of toilet paper. He is apologizing and nearly in tears. I am not too happy myself. I just packaged up the urine, finished the paperwork and sent him on his way.

I felt sorry for his prospective employer. Apparently this applicant has trouble following instructions. If you have doubts about what you are supposed to do, ask. I would much rather repeat the instructions or explain them in a way you can understand than clean up your spilled pee.

Don't be late

I can't say how many times I have called an employer to say that their applicant or random selection did not show up, only to have the donor walk in 10 minutes later. As a rule of thumb, I give about 20 minutes. If your appointment is for 3:00 pm, I will wait until 3:20 pm to call the employer. This is enough time if you are lost or have car trouble to get to a phone and call either us or the employer and let someone know what is going on. I cannot test you after I have called the employer to advise them that you were a “no-show”. Your test must be re-scheduled through the employer. Now the employer knows you cannot show up on time. Not the best impression you are trying to make when

looking for a job. Also, if this is a return-to-duty or follow-up test, showing up late enough for me to call the employer is considered a refusal to test and therefore a positive result. Same thing for probation or parole. If I call your PO and tell them you are a no-show, you can bet he will consider that a violation of your probation or parole. This cannot have a good outcome for you.

Cooperate

I am not here to serve you. Get over yourself and leave your ego at the door. I don't expect you to cow down to me or anything like that, but treat me with respect. I work for your employer or prospective employer. I will report any problems during the drug testing directly to the employer – probably before you get across the parking lot and into your car. Just follow the instructions. I don't care if you hate the whole idea of drug tests and feel they are a violation of your rights. If you despise it that much, walk out the door. Don't take it out on me.

Don't ask me if I like my job or tell me that you could never do my job because you find it to be gross. I am not there to make conversation with you or justify my presence to you. If you find drug testing gross, you will never get a job in the medical field, child care or anything else where bodily functions are a part of daily life. No wonder you are applying for this minimum wage, dead end, retail cashier position. I get paid \$25 for 10 minutes of work pouring your pee in a bottle, snipping your hair or swabbing your mouth and sending it off to a lab so you can get paid \$25 for 4 hours of work sorting clothing on a shelf. Now, who has the better job?

Not sure whether this tip belongs in the "Preparation" section or the "Cooperation" section. Take a crap BEFORE you leave home. Don't take a big old dump and leave it in the toilet for us to look at. That just makes us think you have no class and are totally disgusting. You know that you are taking a piss test, or at least have an idea you might be taking a piss test. If you have to take a crap, do it before you leave home. Show some class.

Preparation

Don't pee before you leave home. Even if you think it is a saliva or hair test, if you aren't sure, don't pee. You can always ask to pee after you get there if you find out it is a saliva or hair test. You can't pee on demand if you just emptied your bladder 20 minutes ago. You cannot leave and come back later (at least you aren't supposed to). I can give you up to 40 ounces of water (not coffee, soda, tea, whatever) spread evenly over 3 hours.

If you do not provide a specimen in 3 hours, you are to go to a physician to find a medical reason for not providing a specimen on that date and time. You have up to 5 days to accomplish this and you probably will have to pay for the physician. Try to make an appointment with a physician within 5 days. You can't do it. Even if you do, short of a major bladder or kidney malfunction, there really is no reason. Even if you are slightly dehydrated, 40 ounces of water will make you pee enough for a drug test.

I have magazines for you to read, but your comfort is not a priority to me, so the seats are uncomfortable, magazines are old, waiting room is too cold or too hot, you are bored, I don't care. Just pee in the damn cup and get out of here.

Documentation

Keep your copy of the custody and control form (CCF). It says where your test was conducted, who the collector was, the identifying number of the specimen, whether your specimen was within temperature range or not, whether it was a split specimen or not, who the Medical Review Officer (MRO) is, etc.

Most of all, it is proof that you actually did take a drug test. If your specimen is lost or damaged in transit, or the lab mis-labels your specimen and it becomes "lost" at the lab, you at least have proof that you took the test. In some cases (DOT random testing, for example) a lost specimen is not a reason to re-test. The DOT figures that you have already tested, and just because your specimen was destroyed or lost during the delivery to the laboratory, is no reason to make you take a re-test. However, you will need your copy of the CCF to prove when, where and most of all that you actually DID take a test.

IF you have your copy of the CCF, you cannot claim that you do not know what type of test (lab or instant), where it went, who the MRO is, etc... If you have questions, you can call the employer and ask if you have your copy of the CCF. If the employer is a large corporation, with offices in several cities, you may be talking to a Human Resource Department person who doesn't know you from Jack. You will need the CCF number (Specimen ID Number) listed at the top of the form. Throwing away the form, or not taking it in the first place severely limits your ability to obtain information.

Insurance

If you are substituting, make sure your substitute urine, either real or synthetic, is good. Get some home tests and validity strips and sacrifice a bit of the urine to a pre-test. That way, you aren't like some, who are soooooo confident going into the test, then when I reveal the results of the instant screen, seem to go into shock.

If you are using your teenagers urine, the worst time to find out that your teen smokes or uses pot is while you are being tested. If you paid for the urine either from a "friend" or the internet, you have no idea if it is good until you actually test it. You have already paid, what does the seller have to lose? You, on the other hand, will be out a job, or worse; your freedom.

Home tests and validity strips are sold over the internet or in your neighborhood drug store. Stock up if you are subject to random testing or are looking for a new job.

Appendix A

Did I mention that you will need your identification to take a drug test?

DETECTION TIMES

Drug tests detect drugs as well as metabolites. Metabolites are the byproducts of a substance after it has run through your system. To determine whether you will pass or not, it is important to know how much of the illicit metabolites are in your urine and how much is tested for. Usually marijuana tests will have a cutoff of 50ng/mL. That is the standard in the industry. You might run across the occasional test that has a lower cutoff level (Level of Detection, [LOD]), Home testing can tell you whether your level at the time of the test is above or below the 50ng/mL level, but it will not tell you the exact level of THC metabolites in your system.

Half-life of TetraHydraCannabinol

The half life of THC concentration ranges between about 1 to 10 days. There is way too much variation to even approximate how long THC will be detected in the urine of an individual. Infrequent users with a fast metabolism will have the shortest detection time. Frequent or chronic users with a slow metabolism will have long detection times. The only way to estimate a detection time is to consider the lower and upper bounds (3-50 days), and decide based on the factors outlined here.

Note: Detection times vary depending on drug potency, tolerance, patient's condition, fluid intake at time of test, and method and frequency of marijuana use. These are general guidelines only.

If you are currently using marijuana and know you have a test coming up, stop using immediately. The longer you abstain, the better your chances of passing a test will be.

Other factors determining degree of intoxication include metabolism, tolerance, frequency of intake, fluid intake, amount of marijuana, and length of time you've been a user. If you use marijuana on rare occasions, your urine may be clean of metabolites in less than a week. There is a common and strange phenomena that occurs with chronic users. You would expect a chronic user to have the longest detection time and the smallest chance of passing. This is not always the case. A chronic user with a high

tolerance may eliminate drugs as fast as an occasional user. Chronic users have tested negative after a week long binge. Fat tissue also makes a huge difference. Skinny users not only have a faster metabolism (usually), but also lack storage for THC metabolites. The more fat a person has, the more THC metabolites will be stored in the body, the longer detection time for a user.

"How long will it take 'til I test clean?" This is the single most frequently asked question. It is impossible for anyone to estimate the time it would take for someone to test clean. The best thing you can do for yourself is test yourself after you've stopped smoking pot. Test about twice weekly until your first urine of the day tests clean. That is how long it takes YOU to clean out after your normal smoking habits. Even that will vary depending on your level of usage prior to abstaining and level of activity while testing yourself. Don't let your best friends brother's girlfriend's cousin's experience be your guide. Every BODY is different.

Computer programs, charts and graphs are virtually useless in determining how long it will take YOU, the individual, to test negative.

Positive (defined)

50 nanograms of THC metabolites per milliliter defines a "presumptive positive" by most laboratories and instant tests. This value was originally 20 ng/mL, but too many false positives resulted. So the level was raised to 100 ng/mL to reduce false positives. As of January 1995, the threshold was lowered back down to 50 ng/mL because drinking excessive water could easily bring the level of metabolites in the urine below 100 ng/mL. Some employers may use a lower cutoff, but that is rare. If a specimen screens non-negative for THC (anything other than negative or fails an integrity test), the specimen is then sent through a Gas Chromatograph / Mass Spectrometer (GC/MS) for the specific metabolite tripping the immunoassay screening. This level is set at 15 ng/mL for that one specific metabolite.

Passive smoke and positives

"If you heard that secondhand marijuana smoke can cause you to fail your drug test the next day, it might be true. It is possible that secondhand marijuana smoke will raise someone to the 50 ng/mL level; however, *EXTREME* exposure is required. For instance, a closed car full of pot smokers might cause someone exposed to that quantity of smoke to test positive in a drug test the next day; provided that they are sealed in the car for a while (a few hours). Non-smokers are safe in a ventilated area such as an average living room or garage where partygoers are smoking pot.

TEST METHODS

There are four basic ways to test a subject for drug use; Urine, hair, saliva and blood. Before continuing, I must say that this text mainly applies to urinalysis. However, I try to cover all drug tests.

It would be helpful if people could somehow find out which test they are getting ahead of time. Though caution must be taken. Asking your boss whether you're getting an instant or lab test or whether the test is a urine, saliva or hair test would imply that you know too much, or seem too curious. There are laws against discriminatory hiring practices and you should know what your rights as an applicant are. Look to your State's labor laws before going on that next big job hunt.. Most are printed online.

Instant Test Devices

Instant tests enable parents to test their children. This is the most convenient and widely test being used. Employers and court systems use the tests to determine if your specimen screens non-negative and needs further confirmation testing in a lab. These devices can be as simple as a simple one drug dip stick test or as advanced as a cup with the test strip and adulterant check built in. For the stick type of devices, the tester dips the test end of the device into the urine, waits 2-4 minutes, and reads the results. The results will be either negative or non-negative. For the cups, you are given a cup, with the test strip covered by a peel-off type of sticker. Some cups test a portion of the urine while keeping the remainder aside for confirmation at a lab if necessary. Instant devices were never meant to be a device to determine if someone was positive for a banned substance. They should only be used to determine if a substance needs further testing through the lab.

Immunoassay

This procedure is best described in Thein and Landry's word's:

Immunoassays use antigen-antibody interactions to detect illegal substances. Antibodies that bind selectively to certain drugs or drug metabolites are chosen, and the sensitivity and the specificity of this test are only as good as the antibody chosen. The binding is proportional to the amount of drug in the urine and can be detected through enzymes,

radioisotopes, or fluorescent compounds. With this technique, very small amounts of drug can be detected in a very small amount of urine, although this test may not differentiate between specific drugs within a class of drugs. Immunoassay has yielded false-positive results with some decongestants and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. Most are 97-99% accurate and false negatives are more common than false positives. Improper storage and handling are the cause of most faulty instant devices. Don't store them below 32 degrees or over 90 degrees for any extended period of time.

Gas Chromatography

Gas chromatography uses a separation technique to divide the urine extracts into the component parts. An inert gas carries the urine through chromatographic columns, and the samples are separated by their boiling temperature and by their affinity for the column. Compounds are identified by separation time, called retention time. The retention time is unique and reproducible for each drug in a given chromatographic column.

Gas Chromatography / Mass Spectrometry

The most precise procedure for detection of banned substances is a combination of GC and MS. Gas chromatography/mass spectrometry is a two-step process, where GC separates the sample into its constituent parts, while MS provides the exact molecular identification of the compounds. Compounds are separated by GC and are then introduced, one at a time, into a mass spectrometer. As the sample constituents enter the MS, they are bombarded by electrons, which cause the compound to break up into molecular fragments. The fragmentation pattern is reproducible and characteristic, and is considered the "molecular-fingerprint" of a specific compound. Gas chromatography/mass spectrometry is considered to be the most definitive method for confirming the presence of a drug in the urine and is approximately 100 to 1,000 times more sensitive than TLC. Selective ion monitoring has been used to improve the GC/MS results. This procedure is standard for any and all specimens sent to a lab that have screened non-negative during the screening process.

The GC/MS is typically used to confirm "non-negative" EMIT and immunoassay test results. GC/MS will indicate precisely what chemical is present. This is necessary because the EMIT & immunoassay are only indicators of whether something similar to what's being tested is present. The GC/MS is difficult and more costly, which is why the EMIT and immunoassay screenings are given first. (Hewlett Packard produces the GC/MS equipment, including computer, for about \$50-75k depending on options.) Abstinence and substitution are the only ways to defeat the GC/MS test. GC/MS is very precise when done right. However, it's still subject to human error. Inaccurate results are very rare. Most laboratories used today are Department of Health and Human Services Certified. They have been through a rigorous and lengthy testing process and have been found to be below the standard cutoff for errors in testing and/or reporting.

Hair testing

When THC metabolites are in the blood, they go through the blood vessels in the head, and deposited into the hair. THC metabolites remain in the hair as a permanent record. The hair test costs a little less than a hundred dollars (anywhere from \$65-\$95) and is not used as often as urinalysis because urinalysis is cheaper (approximately \$40-\$70). Hair tests are widely used in the casino industry. They cut approximately 50 strands of hair close to the scalp, and send it in to the testing lab where they wash it is washed then liquefied. A hair sample is dissolved in a series of solvents which extract the drug metabolites and then are analyzed via GC/MS. It can take several hours to days just to extract metabolites. Average hair grows 1/2 inch per month. Typically they just use hair one and a half inches from the scalp giving about 90 days of history. It has been rumored that labs can test as far back as 3-6 years. This is false. A lab will not test more than history the 1-1/2 inches of hair will reveal. If a collector splits, for example, 3 inches of hair into two separate samples and submits them as being from different donors, the labs cannot know the specimens are from the same hair. Labs frown on this as it would be considered fraud and is not common practice. The liquid is run through the GC/MS machine, and can detect as little as 1 ng/mL. Psychemedics Corporation has a home collection kit for \$69. This home test kit is available if you want to test yourself before applying for a job. Also, parents can test their children.

Beating the hair test is extremely hard, Bleaching or dying your hair is reported to work, but it is very hard on the hair and permanent damage can be expected from such harsh treatments. I imagine you can shave every hair on your body and claim that you're a swimmer, but if you had hair at the interview, and suddenly, after you are informed of an impending hair test, you have no hair; you might be seen as trying to avoid the test.

Currently, the two most prevalent laboratories for hair tests are Psychemedics and Quest Diagnostics. Approximately 90% of all hair tests sent to laboratories are sent to one of these two powerhouses.

SCREENING FOR ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES

Test Standards and Accuracy

The accuracy of drug testing is an area where I've decided to neglect all statistics. Those who oppose drug testing provide numbers indicating a high level of false positives. Those who favor drug testing provide numbers indicating high levels of accuracy. The fact is that accuracy varies widely from lab to lab. Generally speaking, DHHS Certified labs are accurate. Clinton writes:

NIDA (The National Institute of Drug Abuse) is the government organization responsible for regulating the drug-testing industry. The vast majority of urine drug screens done these days conform to NIDA specs, and ALL testing associated with the government (department of transportation, etc.) complies with the NIDA standard. It is NIDA that decides what the "safe" cutoffs are to avoid false positives.... Despite what you might hear on the net, urinalysis, if done correctly, is a very accurate scientific procedure. I know of no lab that simply reports the results of the initial EMIT screening without confirming the sample on GC/MS. The fact is, labs WANT you to test negative, because then they only have to run an EMIT test on your urine (a few cents). If you test positive, they must then confirm the positive result on GC/MS, which is considerably more expensive. . . . Incidentally, the machine which tests the hair is a relative of the GC/MS, but is FAR more precise. It can accurately detect levels of THC as low as 1 ng/mL.

CAP (College of American Pathologists) also certifies laboratories the way NIDA does. NIDA keeps it's labs in check by sending positive and negative double-blind samples. Lab personnel do not know which samples came from NIDA. If the lab results are wrong, NIDA may take away the labs certification. Only labs that perform the GC/MS on site can be NIDA certified. Labs that send samples to another laboratory for GC/MS confirmation are ineligible for NIDA certification. Drug testing, when done properly with all required controls and confirmation procedures, is very accurate and reliable.

Not all labs are NIDA/CAP certified. Some labs do not properly and thoroughly clean the GC/MS equipment. Some labs don't even do a GC/MS confirmation! Some labs use cheap alternative methods to reduce expenses.

Many human errors occur in labs and cause inaccurate results. Some are careless or irresponsible errors, and some errors are accidents. Human error can ruin the results of ANY test, screening or confirmation GC/MS.

The only lab you should be concerned with is the one that is testing you. Only Federally regulated jobs require high laboratory standards. Your typical private employer may use any lab s/he chooses, which would very likely be the least expensive. Businesses don't always choose NIDA labs that follow-up a positive screening test with a confirmation GC/MS. The good news is that even certified labs have perfected the testing process so much that their pricing matches or beats that of non-certified laboratories. A list of certified labs can be found at:

http://dwp.samhsa.gov/DrugTesting/Level_1_Pages/CertifiedLabs.aspx

Procedures used:

In the workplace, an EMIT or immunoassay screening is typically used, with a GC/MS confirmation if the EMIT or immunoassay is non-negative. However, this is not a rule; employers can, and some do, use unusual procedures. Some employers use hair test and still others use saliva testing.

False positives

No laboratory process is completely free from error. The GC/MS test is virtually error free, but the EMIT is far from accurate. There are some false positives you should avoid if you're getting an EMIT test. Take this seriously; false positives run at about 5%. If you know that there will be a GC/MS confirmation test, you can disregard this section. It would be too lengthy to list all of the causes of false positives here, but the most common cause are over-the-counter or prescription medications.

COMMERCIAL PRODUCTS

There are commercial products that claim they can help you pass the test. Some people object to using commercial products because they "are just trying to cash in on the War on Drugs." They charge extremely high prices for their products. Water or better yet, a sports drink tends to work as well as or better than any commercial detox product for most. Also, be aware that most States have outlawed products with the sole purpose of creating negative results on urine tests.

Ignore money-back guarantees. Companies that suck in thousands of hopeful, desperate people make so much money, that a few returns from motivated users are insignificant. People could even get away with offering a money-back guarantee for a detox drink or pill because all the water that people are instructed to drink with the product is what most likely has enabled them to pass the drug test. Some companies don't keep their word. A person who tested positive sent the lab results back, only to be told that marijuana is illegal. He was not even compensated for buying a failing product.

URINE CONTENT

Color:

If a urine sample looks clear, the lab may suspect that it's watered down. It really doesn't matter. Laboratories will run Creatinine levels, pH levels, and Specific Gravity tests to determine if your specimen contains too much water. That is, if you drank excessive amounts of water or other fluids to attempt to dilute or mask the level of THC in your urine. In the end, color, or lack of it may be cause for suspicion, but labs don't act on suspicion. They actually run tests to see if your specimen is within normal range.

Temperature:

Urine should be between 90 and 100 degrees. Certified Collectors will verify the temperature. If it is too high or too low, they will report this on your Custody and Control Form. Any specimen that is not up to temperature is either disposed of and the donor is required to submit another specimen while being observed or is reported as a failed drug test. Disposable pocket hand warmers (sold in department stores) will keep a urine sample warm, provided that the urine is kept in an appropriate container and well hidden.

Creatinine

Creatinine is a substance produced by your body, and it shows up in urine. If someone substitutes with something other than urine, like Mountain Dew, they will test negative for drugs. The donor will not get away with it because Mountain Dew contains zero creatinine and that will definitely trigger a "not human urine" result. Creatinine levels drop below normal when people dilute their urine. This test is to ensure that the subject didn't drink unusually high quantities of water. Eating foods rich in protein like red meat will slightly increase creatinine levels. You do need to allow your body enough time (3-4 days) to covert this protein into creatinine. There are creatine supplements available at most health food stores; bodybuilders use it to help with muscle performance.

pH

pH is often changed when people spike their sample with household products. Use caution when doping your urine, pH is will be tested. Any cleaning product added to the

urine will alter the pH level and is a significant indicator that the specimen has been adulterated.

Specific gravity

An unusually low specific gravity indicates that a sample has been tampered with. Specific gravity is the indicator that there is way too much water in the urine to obtain an accurate measurement of what is actually contained in the urine. Labs want to test urine, not water. That is why these tests are done on the specimens. If the levels are too far outside of the normal range, the specimen is reported as Diluted. If the specimen is so far outside the normal range for human urine or it contains a foreign substance that cannot possibly be human, it is reported as Adulterated. An adulterated result is the same as a positive result.

Age

Age can not be determined during a urine drug test. There is a rumor that approximate age can be detected in urine, and is tested in medical insurance exams. It's a myth.

Gender

Gender cannot be tested either. As with age, there is a rumor that gender can be detected in urine, and is tested in medical insurance exams. It's another myth. There also is no pregnancy test done during a drug test.

Producing Clean Urine

THC is fat soluble, and it gets stored in your fat cells. Cleaning it out of your lipid tissue is very difficult. Many herbal products claim to clean out your system, yet they do nothing to remove THC byproducts from fat cells. A study was done in Germany in 1993 on 50 of the most common herbs used by people trying to pass the test. All 50 herbs failed to cause a negative. Unfortunately, this rumor will not die. Goldenseal (plant) is useless; yet it's the most common thing for people to use. The only way to extract THC from fat cells is to exercise. Your body uses the fat cells with THC metabolites at a constant rate, regardless of what herbs you consume. You may be able to temporarily

clean THC metabolites from your bloodstream, or dilute your fluids to yield a larger urine/THC ratio, but your bloodstream will continue collecting THC metabolites from fat. Your urine will continue collecting THC metabolites from your bloodstream.

Keep in mind that THC is only detectable in blood tests for 3-5 days after stopping marijuana use and not detected after the fat cells holding it have been used by the body for fuel. This is because the concentration of THC going into the fat cells is much higher than it is when it is going from the fat cells to the kidneys. There, in the kidneys, it is again concentrated in the urine to much more detectable levels.

Dilution

Hyper saturating your body with fluids will dilute metabolites possibly below the 50 ng/mL threshold, depending on your metabolism. Be aware that creatinine levels are tested, and will show that the sample has been diluted if they are too low. It is only necessary to start drinking just before the test. Those who drown themselves in fluid days before a test are only causing unnecessary discomfort. Those who stay up all night drinking don't have any better chance than one who drinks heavily first thing in the morning. Get up early if the test is early, but don't lose sleep over a test that's given in the daytime.

Water

Many people start drinking water several days before the test; which is useless. Water, (green tea, cranberry juice, etc.) does **not** clean any THC metabolites out of your system because THC is not water soluble. Water only dilutes urine temporarily. Do not over do it; you can get water intoxication. People can actually overdose and even die from water intoxication. It's very hard to do, and you'll vomit before anything gets serious.

Vitamin B

Color your sample yellow by taking 50 to 100 milligrams of vitamin B. Many vitamins will work, but B-2 or B-12 (found in B-complex vitamins) are the most effective. This

does not guarantee that dilution will work. Diluted samples have been red-flagged when specific gravity and creatinine levels are tested and below normal. If you're taking vitamins at the last minute, check to see if they're time release. If so, crush it up and consume the powder. Coloring your urine isn't all that important because as mentioned before, the labs test the urine for content, not color.

Diuretics

Diuretics make people urinate frequently. Coffee, cranberry juice, beer, iced tea, herbal tea, and other fluids containing caffeine are all good diuretics. Grapes are known to be very good diuretics. Diuretics without caffeine or alcohol are recommended because caffeine and alcohol have negative side effects. Sports drinks are most recommended because they replace electrolytes and contain ingredients the body can use to quickly absorb the fluid into the cells resulting in enough excess fluid available for diluting the THC in the urine to undetectable levels.

Detox drinks, pills and potions

None of these work reliably enough to be recommended. The only reason that some have tested clean after using any of these products is because the water or juice you are instructed to take has diluted your urine. You can accomplish the same thing on your own with less than \$10 worth of products readily found at any shopping mall. Using a detox product is risky because you cannot control the manufacturer's ingredients. You never know what has gone into the detox product so you cannot possibly know if a laboratory will detect the use of the product.

Fiber

A high fiber diet will help by redirecting fat soluble metabolites to the colon rather than bladder. It has been said that THC is eliminated primarily in the stool via bile acids. Tests detect a secondary metabolite which is reabsorbed from the intestines. Thus a person with a high fiber diet will excrete some THC [metabolites] in the stool". A fiber-based laxative will also help by binding bile-acids. Use caution. Fiber laxatives can alter one's bowel schedule and lead to dependency. In other words: You can get the shits or constipated.

The quantity of THC excreted through the stool is minimal at best and is probably not worth the effort or attempt.

How to give a clean sample

Don't give urine from your first urination of the day. It's the dirtiest. Urinate a couple of times before giving a test sample. Also, don't give the beginning or end of the stream. Piss in the toilet, then quickly stop and go in the cup. Stop, and shift back to the toilet for the last portion. Only give a midstream sample. Just be sure to give 60 milliliters.

Exercise

Athletes have a big advantage over inactive people. When fat is burned, THC byproducts are released into the blood, filtered in the kidneys and expelled from the body in the urine. This is the main way to get THC metabolites out of your body. "Normal living will burn them slowly, as your fat reserves are burned then replaced with new fat stores. Due to an athlete's high metabolic rate, THC moves through an athlete's system significantly faster. Exercising between drug tests will clean THC metabolites from the system at a faster rate, thus lowering the detection period. It is important to stop burning fat cells near test time. On test day, it doesn't matter what's in your lipid tissue. What's in your blood and urine does matter. Exercise increases the amount of THC metabolites in the urine; so quit exercising 4-5 days before the test. Be lazy, and eat big. This will put the body into a fat-storing stage. At this point, the "buried" THC metabolites won't be released from your fat reserves at such a high rate. There are drugs that will increase metabolism the way exercise does, but these are the same drugs that they are usually testing for. Exercise should only be considered when the subject knows that he or she will not be given a random test in the near future.

As a word of caution, if you have led a rather sedentary lifestyle, consult a doctor before taking on any rigorous exercise program. We don't want any of you having heart attacks, tearing muscles or suffering from any other sports related injuries.

DETECTING COUNTER MEASURES

Laboratories know how easy it is to tamper with urine samples and alter the results. Laboratories test to find out if the sample is legitimate.

Color:

If a urine sample looks clear, the lab or the collector may suspect that it's watered down because you have drank excessive fluids. They can't report it as positive, they cannot even reject the specimen due to color (or lack of it). You can take vitamin B complex to color your urine yellow. It isn't necessary, but if it makes you feel better, go for it. Don't go overboard on the vitamins or you will get neon green pee.

Temperature:

Urine should be between 90 and 100 degrees. The urine collector will verify the temperature and mark whether it was between 90 and 100 degrees or not. If it isn't, they will suspect you added water to the cup, or used substitution. Disposable pocket hand warmers (sold in department stores) will keep a urine sample warm. Simply tape the hand warmer to the outside of the container. Be sure to leave some space if you are using air activated hand warmers.

Standard Laboratory Adulterant Checks:

Creatinine is a byproduct of creatine. If someone substitutes their urine with something other than urine (or synthetic urine), the lab will not detect drugs, however; the specimen will be rejected or labeled adulterated due to the abnormally low level of creatinine. If the creatinine level is too low, the specimen is determined to be not human urine and you will fail your drug test. If the specimen is abnormally low, but within the parameters of human urine, the lab will label it to be diluted. If no drugs are detected in a diluted specimen, the specimen is labeled "Negative dilute". If drugs are detected in a dilute specimen it will be labeled "positive dilute". A positive dilute result is the same as a positive drug test. It means you failed the drug test.

pH is often changed when people spike their sample with household products like cleansers, soaps or shampoos. Like creatinine, there is a level where normal urine falls as far as the pH level is concerned. If you have fallen outside that normal parameter, your specimen will be labeled “adulterated”. An adulterated specimen is the same as a positive specimen. It means you failed your drug test.

Specific Gravity is also used to determine if you have tried to dilute your urine by drinking an excessive quantity of fluids before a drug test. There is a normal range for specific gravity for humans and if you fall too far below that level, your urine will be labeled “dilute”. If you fall so far as to be outside the possibility of human urine; for example if you added tap water to your specimen, the lab will report the result as adulterated. Remember, an adulterated specimen is a failed drug test.

Not detectable

Gender, age, pregnancy, hepatitis, aids, etc. None of these are detectable in a drug test. The drug test is detecting DRUGS in the system, nothing else. The tests look for specific things and do not report everything available in the urine. Just because a specimen comes from a pregnant 23 year old unmarried college student, if the urine contains no illegal substances, the drug test result will be negative.

A 1-panel test usually tests for only THC. A 2-panel test tests for two different drugs. Could be amphetamines and THC, could be cocaine and opium. A 5-panel test detects five different illegal substances. A 10 panel test detects up to 10 different illegal substances and so on and so forth. A DOT regulated drug test is a 5-panel test detecting amphetamines, cocaine, opium, THC and PCP. Most non-DOT regulated pre-employment and random tests done for employment purposes are either a 5- or 10-panel test.

HOW TO “CLEAN” YOUR SYSTEM

THC is fat soluble, and it gets stored in your fat cells. Cleaning it out body is not difficult, it just takes time. Many different products sold in head shops, health food stores and over the internet claim to clean out your system, yet they do nothing to remove THC byproducts from fat cells. Think about it for a minute. If one product could effectively clean all toxins from your body, wouldn't that put an end to viruses, poisonings and cancers? You could just drink one bottle of the “Detox Solution, pill or paste” and you could live in a moldy house with no ill effects. How would anyone ever die of lead poisoning again if we had this miracle product that actually worked as it is advertised? Unfortunately, enough of you are still purchasing this snake oil to make it profitable for the people ripping you off. They will continue to sell as long as gullible people continue to buy. If you look closely at the “guarantee”, usually it says you must submit drug test results in writing. Well, if an employer paid for the test and received the results, you don't have them to submit. Also, since it is illegal in most states to purchase or sell any product designed to “beat” or “fool” a legal drug test, the manufacturers advertise these products as a way to defeat a nicotine test. Well, if you submit a failed illegal substances test, they will not honor the guarantee because the product is advertised to mask nicotine use – not illegal drug use. Look at the ingredients before you buy. You will find that they are mostly sugar, water, vitamins and creatine. You can get those ingredients at your grocery store for a lot less than the \$50 - \$100 you will pay for a fancy label and a bottle of sugar water.

There are plenty of brand names out there and also herbal remedies passed down through years and years of rumor. One problem with most of these folk remedies and detoxification products is that the results are too unreliable. They might work for Joe, but Jane tries the same thing that Joe did and is disappointed to learn she has failed miserably. Another problem is that these rumors have been passed through so many mouths that the original story is unrecognizable. Does this sound somewhat familiar?:

“My buddy's girlfriend's best friend's second cousin's husband's brother passed his drug test using Goldenseal. He took it the very morning of his test, then he smoked pot in the car on the way to the testing facility, hell, the drug tester held his pipe for him and he still passed! (yea, right)”

Remember; if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is too good to be true. There is a reason drug testing has lasted as long as it has. Because it works. It is damn hard to beat. There is no one sure fire method for beating a drug test other than complete abstinence.

I know what you are thinking: What about Certo? What about Vale? I heard that green tea works wonders for a drug test! I heard that if you drank 16 ounces of concentrated cranberry juice for 7 days straight, it would cleanse your liver and kidneys of THC.

If those methods worked reliably, wouldn't you think that the secret would be out by now? Laboratories would develop a way to overcome any product you could take to hide or mask your drug use. There is nothing that is proven to be 100% effective in “cleaning” THC from the body. Use your common sense. The evidence of pot is in your body. Only time and exercise can remove it. Mostly time, but exercise helps.

Excessive fluid intake

Flooding your body with fluids will create more fluid in the urine making the ratio of THC in the urine fall below the cutoff level of most drug tests (50 ng/mL) Drinking water or cranberry juice days before a drug test does nothing but overwork your kidneys and raise your water bill due to excessive flushing. Remember, you cannot “wash away” THC from your body. It must be burned out of the fat cells via aerobic exercise raising the metabolism. If you want to dilute your urine to try to get the level of THC below the given cutoff level, it is only necessary to drink fluids starting 3-4 hours before your test time.

DILUTION TECHNIQUE

It is almost impossible for most people to dilute successfully unless they have abstained for at least 2-3 days. The longer you have not used pot before your test, the easier it is to pass (obviously).

Creatinine

At few days prior to your test, you should raise your creatinine levels. Creatine metabolizes into creatinine within 24-48 hours after ingestion. Remember, the laboratories test creatinine levels in the urine to determine if you have diluted (drank too much fluid before a test). There is no “top end” to the normal levels of creatinine in your urine, but if your urine tests too low for creatinine you will receive a “diluted” result. Normal range is anywhere from about 110 – 200, and it is not uncommon for labs to see a lot of levels in the 20 – 30ng/dL; but as I said, there is no top end to the scale. Anything below 20ng/dL is considered “low” and can be an indication of a diluted specimen.

Aspirin

Anywhere from 4-6 hours prior to test time, you should take 3-4 aspirin. This is not to be confused with ibuprophen, advil or any other “non-aspirin” pain reliever. This has been reported to interfere with an immunoassay test and can help give a negative result. The labs have reported that they have overcome this “flaw” in the testing, but it really cannot do much damage and can help with the headache you are getting from all this nasty testing business in the first place., hours before the test take 4 aspirin (not Tylenol or Advil). This step may be repeated every 4-6 hours up until 4 hours before the test.

Fluid intake

Begin drinking a sports drink about 3 hours prior to test time. 16 ounces of Gatorade®, PowerAde® or any other brand of sports drink to start. Then, every 15 minutes, drink another 8 ounces and continue this for the next hour. Shortly after you finish drinking

the sports drink you will begin to feel the urge to urinate. You should feel the need to pee every 20 minutes or so and your urine will be very clear (colorless). Drink about 4-6 ounces of the sports drink to replace what you have urinated each time you urinate.

Vitamins

When you begin to urinate every 20 minutes, you should take a b2 (riboflavin) or b complex vitamin. If you take a multivitamin each morning, the morning of your test, you might want to take 2 or 3 of them.

Make sure to void a couple of times at least, before you actually take the test. You want to flush any old urine, containing high amounts of THC, from your bladder before you go and give a specimen to be tested.

Practice helps. If you purchase a few home tests, (available cheap over the internet) try a dilution run at home a couple of days before your scheduled test. That way you can tell if the dilution method will actually work for you. If it doesn't, you will need to look into substitution.

Remember, drinking loads of water, cranberry juice or tea in the days leading up to the test does nothing to "clean out" your system. All it does is waste toilet water and paper. You cannot "flush" THC from your system with excessive fluid intake. The entire purpose of the dilution method is to make the ratio of THC metabolites to urine fall below the cutoff level thereby obtaining a negative result. It doesn't actually remove any more THC from your body, it just adds pee. Sort of like adding thinner to paint. It doesn't remove the paint, just makes it less dense.

Quantity

You will, at the most, only need 60 milliliters of urine. That is approximately 2 ounces. The collector will probably ask for at least 4 ounces of urine. Be aware that the collector cannot reject your specimen for insufficient quantity if you have given what is

needed. Just because more is asked for, does not mean that is the quantity that is required. Collectors always ask for more urine for a couple of reasons:

1. If we have a larger quantity, we don't have to check the temperature quite as fast. The smaller quantity of urine, the faster the temp will fall after it is in the cup.
2. If we asked for only 2 ounces, inevitably most donors will only give 1-1/2 ounces or 1 ounce. That is not enough, you will not be allowed to leave the testing facility and you will be required to sit there and slowly drink water at a controlled pace until you can produce the required quantity.

If the collector asks for more, it is only to ensure the donor gives enough the first time.

Exercise

People who exercise regularly, people who are naturally thin or have very fast metabolisms are very lucky for more than the obvious reasons. THC is stored in the fatty tissue of the human body. The less fatty tissue a person has, the less stored THC that person has. People with faster metabolites tend to “turn over” the fat cells in the body at a much faster rate than their heavier, less active counterparts. For those of you who have a few weeks of notice before their tests, exercising can be a great way of reducing the levels of THC in the body.

Be sure to stop all or most activity about 5 days or so before test day. That will stop the body from burning fat cells and putting the THC into the urine. It helps to pig out on fatty foods during the few days before test time as well.

DRUG SCREENS

Some chemicals taken orally are advertised as masking traces of marijuana in urine. They don't work to mask or cleanse the body of toxins. The only thing they might do is dilute the urine so much that the level of THC drops below the cutoff of the test. Most herbal products claim to do a lot more than they actually do. Don't be fooled by herbal potions that claim to flush or absorb toxins. If they actually worked to flush toxins, then there would be no more poisonings, cancer, infections, viruses, etc. It would be considered the miracle answer to all medical illnesses.

Drug screens that might work:

Aspirin

Taking 4 aspirins a few hours prior to the test might help you. Aspirin used to interfere with an EMIT assay. This was many years ago, and testing methodology has evolved to prevent most "screens" from being effective. Just as you are learning about ways to cheat drug tests, so are the laboratories and manufacturers of instant test kits. They are constantly updating their products and methods to keep up with products and methods developed to beat drug tests. It is illegal in many to manufacture anything designed to 'fool' or 'beat' a legally given drug test. It doesn't hurt to take aspirin prior to a drug test, it can only help if due to all the stress of the drug test you develop a headache, but I am not certain of the effectiveness of taking it for the purpose of fooling a drug test.

Drug screens that do not work:

Goldenseal

Goldenseal is an outdated and obsolete myth. It never worked and so many people were using it to try to beat a drug test, the laboratories started testing for goldenseal. If excessive amounts are found in your specimen, it could be reported that you have attempted to adulterate your specimen. and California NORML advises against using it and so do I.

Niacin

Another myth. Doesn't work reliably and never will. This ranks right up there with goldenseal.

Zinc sulfate

Zinc sulfate is claimed to bond with THC metabolites (false), and because it's a solid, it gets passed as stool rather than urine. Which does nothing to help a urine, blood or saliva drug test. "zinc sulfate is no miracle drug for passing. Forget it."

Puri-Blend, The Stuff, Purifyit, any other type of detox drink

These are the biggest ripoff since snake oil. If you look at the ingredients, they are nothing more than sugar water, vitamins and common supplements. You can get the same effect (and the guarantee would be as effective) from flavored sports drink or drinking koolaid taking a multivitamin.

Water

Do not add water (tap, distilled, whatever) to your specimen. This will alter the specific gravity of the specimen, a common adulterant test found on most instant and done for all laboratory tests. Considering the municipality or source of the water, the chlorine found in the water might also be detected. Most collection facilities will have the faucet water disabled and the toilet water colored with dye. If you were thinking of adding water to your specimen, which you shouldn't, you would have to carry it in with you.

Since most drug tests detect THC in your urine, adding a foreign substance to your urine really does nothing to sway the test. You can add sour cream, for example, to your urine and it won't remove the THC. The test will still detect THC.

DOPING SAMPLES

"Doping" samples consists of spiking the sample with different chemicals and substances. This is never a good idea for one reason: You don't know what type of test will be run on your specimen. Most instant testing now days is done in conjunction of some type of adulterant test. Even the simple little immunoassay test done at the time of an interview come with an adulterant panel built into them. Some additives alter the urine's pH, add oxidants or throw the specific gravity out of range for normal human urine. Labs test the pH, nitrates, specific gravity and oxidants to see if the sample has been adulterated. Household products and cleansers will be detected and commercial additives, if they are not detected, they probably will not work. This includes bleach, ammonia, Draino, hydrogen peroxide, soaps, etc. Again, commercial additives, detox products and synthetic urine are illegal in most states, and some commercial vendors will not ship their product to an address in those states. That is why most will advertise that the product is an "herbal cleanser" or a product designed to clean "nicotine" from the system. As far as the guarantee is concerned, if a product is advertised to "block" or "mask" nicotine from the urine and you provide proof of a failed drug test that doesn't test for nicotine, the guarantee does not apply. Just so you are aware, no employer, court system, or rehab facility will test for nicotine. You might look on the internet to find vendors and/or distributors who will ship their product to your location no matter what the law, but keep in mind the product has probably changed hands several times. You don't know whether the product has been stored properly or if it is out-of-date prior to purchase. If you are subject to random tests, you may want to consider keeping a synthetic urine in your lunchbox or some other personal space where you could have access once notified of a drug test.

SUBSTITUTION

This method works for every urine test, every time (provided that some conditions are met). You simply give them clean urine (from a “donor”) or synthetic urine. This works very well if you're not observed. If you are going to be observed, then this method may not work for you. Females have been known to keep a condom or a small plastic container with a flip top lid, filled with a clean urine sample in the vagina, and prick it with a sharp fingernail to piss under supervision.

There is no way you can talk a collector out of observing when protocol calls for an observed test. An observed test is warranted if you have been caught with adulteration or substitution materials in your possession, you have failed a drug test in the past, Your specimen fails to meet certain criteria (such as temperature or color) you are in the military or been ordered by the courts to participate in drug testing. People in the military, on active duty are always observed. The observer must watch the urine flow from the body into the collection cup. If it is done correctly, you cannot beat it. The good news is that it is rarely done correctly. Simply being in the room with a donor is not adequate, but that is usually what is done. If the observer doesn't look closely, or allows you to turn your back (male), then you might be able to get away with subbing while taking an observed test. This is what is known as a monitored test. The only legitimate reason for a monitored test is if the collector cannot secure all water sources (as in a multi-stall restroom) or the restroom has more than one entrance/exit.

If your test is not observed, you can substitute easily. It is recommended that you practice your substitute technique until you feel comfortable doing it. That way, you can overcome problems such as leaky containers, inadequate temperature, noisy caps, etc.

Simply conceal the urine. As soon as you are alone in the restroom, pour your substitute urine in the collection cup. Be sure you can quietly open the container; the collector will probably be within earshot of the restroom and will hear any unusual noises. You will not be required to change into a gown for a simple employment or court ordered test. IF you

are taking a physical for employment purposes you may be asked to put on the gown at the beginning of the office visit. If so, then just tell the nurse that you need to “go” really badly and can’t wait. Could you be allowed to give your specimen now instead of waiting for the doctor to come into the room? Usually they will take pity on you and lead you to the restroom immediately to give the specimen, then lead you to the exam room after.

A travel size shampoo container works best for substitution. Simply clean the bottle thoroughly, then fill with clean urine. Tape the bottle to your underwear or place between two pairs of underwear, snugly in your crotch. If you are worried about maintaining proper temperature (between 90 – 100 degrees), you can heat the specimen in a glass of hot coffee, water or other beverage, or you can tape a hand warmer (sold in most sporting good stores) to the outside of the container. This should maintain the temperature for about 8-10 hours.

A specimen “donated” by a clean friend or family member can be kept in the crotch for up to 10-12 hours. You can keep a specimen at room temperature for up to 2 days without refrigeration. If you need to keep the specimen longer, it can be refrigerated for up to a week. Longer storage will require that the specimen to be frozen. Frozen urine is good in an airtight container for up to a year.

Do not attempt to inject urine into the bladder. Some have claimed to be able to do this using a syringe or catheter. The risk of infection is simply not worth it. Get some perspective here. If you need to pass a drug test that badly, you shouldn’t have been using marijuana in the first place. Remember: The only 100% sure fire way to pass a drug test is to not use drugs.

Sources for clean urine

Donor

You can substitute someone else's urine. If in doubt whether your friend’s urine will pass a test, you can purchase home tests and integrity strips off the internet. Simply do a Google search for drug tests or integrity strips and choose your vendor. It doesn’t matter

if your donor is of the opposite sex or pregnant. If your donor is menstruating, as long as no visible blood has gotten into the specimen, it is fine. If the specimen is visibly bloody and you are male, you might have a hard time explaining this to the collector. What does matter is if your donor is taking prescription medication that will be detected. If so, you will need all the information regarding your donor's medical condition including: The ailment, doctor's name, medication, prescription number off the bottle the last dosage and time taken and the dosage instructions. It might just be better to find another donor.

Age, gender, pregnancy, medical conditions, etc., are not tested during a drug test. The last thing the laboratory wants to do is extra work. They are paid to test for a certain array of substances. They are not going to find the exact chemical properties of your urine, including any hormones that may be present. Your specimen will be tested to see if it contains certain drugs and if it has qualities consistent with human urine. Nothing more, nothing less.

Synthetic

Synthetic urine has human qualities, so it will pass validity testing and it does not contain banned substances, so it will pass drug testing. You can obtain synthetic urine over the internet. There are several vendors available and a range of prices. Make sure that the vendor you choose to purchase from will ship to your area. You might even be able to find a distributor in your area. Most head shops or smoke shops will sell synthetic urine if it is legal in your State.

Making your own powdered urine

Urinate in a glass container. Let it evaporate. Then scrape the inside for the concentrate. Just mix it with water before the test, and the sample will have the correct specific gravity, pH, color, etc. Sounds good huh? NOT! This is much more work and takes much more time than you have. In the time it takes you to evaporate your urine and scrape the residue from the container, you could have found a clean donor or bought synthetic off the internet.

Dog urine: I heard from Dr. Grow that dog urine (of all things) can be substituted, and will pass the test! This is false. Canine urine has different specific gravity than human urine. It will be determined to be a specimen not consistent with human urine and you will receive an adulterated result. That is equivalent to failing the drug test. Besides, do you really want to follow Fido around the yard with a little cup? Have some pride people!

STEALING URINE

It has been reported that people have been known to get away with stealing their sample from the tray among many other urine samples. This is virtually impossible. To conduct a drug test collection properly, you cannot have more than one donor testing at the same time. In other words, you can have only one open container of urine at any one time. If you have several people in the waiting room, they will just have to wait until the collector has completed your test/collection completely before taking another subject into the restroom. Your specimen must be sealed in the shipping container or in the case of instant testing, the test must be completed and the excess urine discarded before another donor is allowed in the area. If your specimen is lost or destroyed during shipping or misplaced at the laboratory (this happens rarely, but it does happen), you will be called in to re-test. Wait until you have confirmed results before indulging again.

IF YOU FAIL

If you fail the test, there is really nothing you can do. You can get mad and rant and rave, but in the end it will do no good. You will be interviewed by a Medical Review Officer (MRO), who will ask you questions regarding any medical conditions, foods, etc. There really is no legal reason to have marijuana in your system, so there is nothing you can say to the MRO to justify a positive drug test result. You are screwed. MRO's are impartial. An MRO cannot be an employee of the lab, have any monetary benefit from a lab (own stock or be a part owner). They are paid for their services from the employer and are not swayed by tears or long, drawn out excuses. I know of a laboratory who was put out of business simply by providing (recommending) an MRO to employers. By regulation, MRO's must be totally independent of the laboratory. An MRO can be an employee of the company to which you are applying. Some very large corporations have a doctor on staff who also serves the MRO duties. That is perfectly legal.

A Medical Review Officer (MRO) will review the collection and laboratory procedures to ensure the collection and testing was done correctly, then they will analyze the results. It is a fact based job. If you are taking a prescription that is causing the positive result (some cancer meds can test positive for marijuana), the MRO will phone you're your physician and/or pharmacy to determine if it is really you that the medication was prescribed to. They will also note the time of collection and ask you the time you last ingested the medication. If the expected quantity of drug in your urine doesn't match the laboratory report, you are determined to be positive for an illegal substance. If you fight a positive result, your lawyer "can subpoena the proficiency testing records of the laboratory for review". This is probably a huge waste of time and money. Most laboratories undergo proficiency testing regularly and the quality control measures are reviewed and updated as needed. Blind samples are sent to laboratories on a periodic basis. Both confirmed positives (bought from a supplier for just this purpose) and confirmed negative specimens are sent to laboratories. If one of these specimens are tested and found to be anything other than what they should be, the laboratory could lose its certification. Your energy would be better put towards finding other employment opportunities.

SPLIT SPECIMENS

If, during your drug test, you see the collector putting the specimen into two separate vials, this is known as a “split specimen”. One vial is tested right away. If it is determined to be positive, the results are forwarded to the MRO. When the MRO calls you to discuss the drug test, after he says that you are positive, you can deny it and ask to have the second vial sent to an independent laboratory to be tested. Keep in mind that the second vial is filled with the same urine as the first vial. Also, the second vial will not be subject to the immunoassay screening. It will instead be sent to the GC/MS and tested for the same drug that was found to be positive in the first vial. If the second lab fails to confirm the findings of the first lab, then your specimen will be determined to be negative.

Keep in mind that there is no provision for the employer to pay for this second test, but if the second lab fails to confirm, most employers will reimburse you for the second lab. Getting a first lab’s result overturned is extremely rare. In fact, I have never seen it happen. The split specimen process is in place to protect the donor against a mix-up in the lab or in the event that the laboratory equipment is faulty. I suppose it could happen, but I have never seen it.

If you do decide to challenge the findings in court, the things your lawyer should ask about the lab are:

Is the lab certified?

Do they participate in appropriate proficiency testing?

Have they ever failed a proficiency test?

What are the qualifications of the technical staff performing the test?

What technologies do they use to screen and confirm?

Total myth story:

Laura Gibson, a medical doctor on the internet, tested positive and was not hired. She had a poppy seed bagel that morning, not knowing it was a false positive. She fought it to the point where they just decided to throw out the results and hire her anyway.

There is no way that this person would have been found positive after only one poppy seed bagel. Even if that did happen, the GC/MS would have determined it to be from poppy seeds. Also the quantity of opium in her system would have been consistent with

food ingestion, rather than illegal drug use (heroin or prescription drug abuse). As a medical doctor, this person would or should have know this. This story is a scare tactic commonly used to sell a detox or urine additive product.

GETTING RESULTS

Many employers will not show lab results to employees or applicants. If you are an applicant, you will be eliminated as a candidate and be prohibited from applying again for at least 1 year. If you are an employee, you are entitled to the drug test results. You may be required to make this request in writing to the HR department, but they must give you the contents of your file if you request it.

If you are taking court ordered testing, then your test should be available to you or your lawyer.