

How to Take a Mid-Stream Specimen of Urine (MSU)

What is the purpose of this leaflet?

- This leaflet explains what a Mid-Stream Specimen of Urine (MSU), why you need to take one, and how to take an MSU at home.

What is an MSU?

- An MSU is a sample of urine that is sent to a laboratory to be tested for evidence of infection. Urine does not normally contain any Micro-organisms (bugs); therefore, if the laboratory finds Micro-organisms, there is an infection.

Why do I need to provide an MSU?

- Current guidelines advise that we must have treated any urine infections before you undergo your surgical procedure. An MSU is required to help diagnose any infection.
- If an infection is found, your MSU is tested to determine which antibiotics will treat the infection. Some Micro-organisms are resistant to certain antibiotics; therefore, this stage is important to find out which antibiotics are effective at killing the Micro-organisms.

Won't I have symptoms if I have a urine infection?

- You may have symptoms, which include pain on passing urine and needing to pass urine more often than usual. However, not everyone experiences these symptoms, consequently an MSU is needed.

When should I take my MSU?

- You need to take your MSU two weeks before your operation preferably, unless advised otherwise. This provides adequate time to test the sample and start treatment if there is an infection. When you receive your operation date, please wait until two weeks before your operation before taking your MSU. If there is less than two weeks until your operation, please call the Pre-operative Assessment Unit for advice, on **01603 288794** between **08:00-17:00** Monday – Friday.

What happens if I am unable / forget to provide an MSU?

- It is very important that you provide an MSU. We need the test results of your MSU before we carry out your surgical procedure. If you have not provided an MSU, please contact the Pre-operative Assessment Unit on, **01603 288794** 08:00 - 17:00, Monday – Friday for advice. We may still be able to carry out your surgical procedure.

How do I take an MSU?

- You will have been given a yellow top container with a with a removable protective sticky film on the top and a green topped Vacuum specimen tube, with your hospital label attached, together with a plastic bag and request form. Please do not open this container until you are ready to take an MSU.

When you start to urinate, the initial stream may “wash off” bugs that live on your skin, and therefore will initially be contaminated. We need a sample of urine from the middle of the stream. Please do not touch any part of the bottle with your genitals as you may transfer bugs from your skin.

- Clean your hands, and if possible, your genitals as well.
- Open the yellow topped container.
- Men, retract your foreskin. Women, hold open the entrance to your vagina.
- Start to urinate into the toilet, wait for a second or two, and without stopping the stream of urine collect some urine in the pot.
- Try to fill the bottle at least 2/3rds from the top.
- Finish passing the rest of your urine into the toilet.
- Place the yellow screw top back on the container.
- Now remove the white sticky protective film and push the green bottle over the grey spike until it clicks. This will now fill with urine and is your specimen.
- Place this into the bag provided and re-seal.
- If you can, get the sample to your GP surgery within two hours.
- Discard of the yellow topped container.

What do I do if I'm finding it difficult to use the bottle provided?

- If you are finding it tricky to collect urine in the bottle provided, then you can use a different container (e.g. a disposable plastic cup, or jar), and then pour the urine into the yellow topped bottle. Make sure this container is very clean. Wash it thoroughly and use boiling water to rinse it out. Then follow the steps above to collect your urine in the same way.

How long does it take for an MSU to be processed?

- An MSU takes 2-7 days for the laboratory to process.

What happens if my MSU tests positive for an infection?

- If your MSU is positive for an infection, a Nurse will contact you and provide advice. We will ask you to urgently attend your GP surgery for a prescription of antibiotics to treat the infection.

Will you contact me if my MSU does not show an infection?

- We will **only** contact you if your MSU shows evidence of an infection.

What should I do if I have any questions?

- Please contact the Pre-operative Assessment Unit on **01603 288794** (08:00-17:00, Monday – Friday).

