Quest Diagnostics®

Understanding instant oral fluid drug testing

Frequently asked questions

Oral fluid drug testing offers a minimally invasive, observed collection to detect recent drug use. Using oral fluid, a collector can oversee the collection, reducing the likelihood of tampering or cheating. When speed is a high priority, Quest Diagnostics offers testing solutions giving employers flexibility for hiring events, job fairs, and on-site collections.

What is oral fluid drug testing?

Oral fluid drug testing offers a minimally invasive, observed collection to detect recent drug use. Using oral fluid (saliva), an employer can oversee donors as they collect their own specimens, reducing the likelihood of tampering or cheating and a donor challenge later in the drug testing process.

How do instant oral fluid drug tests work?

Instant oral fluid tests offered by Quest Diagnostics utilize the industry-standard technology known as a "lateral flow immunoassay." These tests provide results in less than 10 minutes, identifying the absence or possible presence of illicit drugs.

What drug testing situations are best suited to an instant test?

Express Results® Instant Oral drug testing can be used for on-site collections at places of employment, hiring events, and job fairs. The flexibility of instant testing provides options suiting most drug testing situations. Some examples of use cases include

- On-site or remote hiring events
- Post-accident testing
- Reasonable suspicion program
- Random testing program
- When quick results are needed for business continuity and productivity

How should I incorporate instant oral fluid testing into my workplace program?

Instant testing augments existing workforce drug testing programs when an immediate result is needed, an observed collection is desired, or when there is a lack of available secured restrooms for urine drug test collection. Additionally, recruiting events and on-site testing scenarios present excellent situations for instant testing.

How soon can a positive result be seen?

Oral testing offers near-immediate detection of drugs in as little as 2 hours after ingestion.

Is the instant oral testing device compliant with FDA standards?

Yes. All oral fluid testing systems—including instant testing devices—used by Quest Diagnostics are compliant with current FDA requirements for employment testing for drugs of abuse. The drug cutoffs are listed in the table below; included drugs are dependent on the specific device ordered.

Is instant oral fluid testing effective at detecting marijuana?

Instant testing is effective for screening for THC. However, instant testing is not as sensitive as the lab-based oral fluid test when testing for THC.

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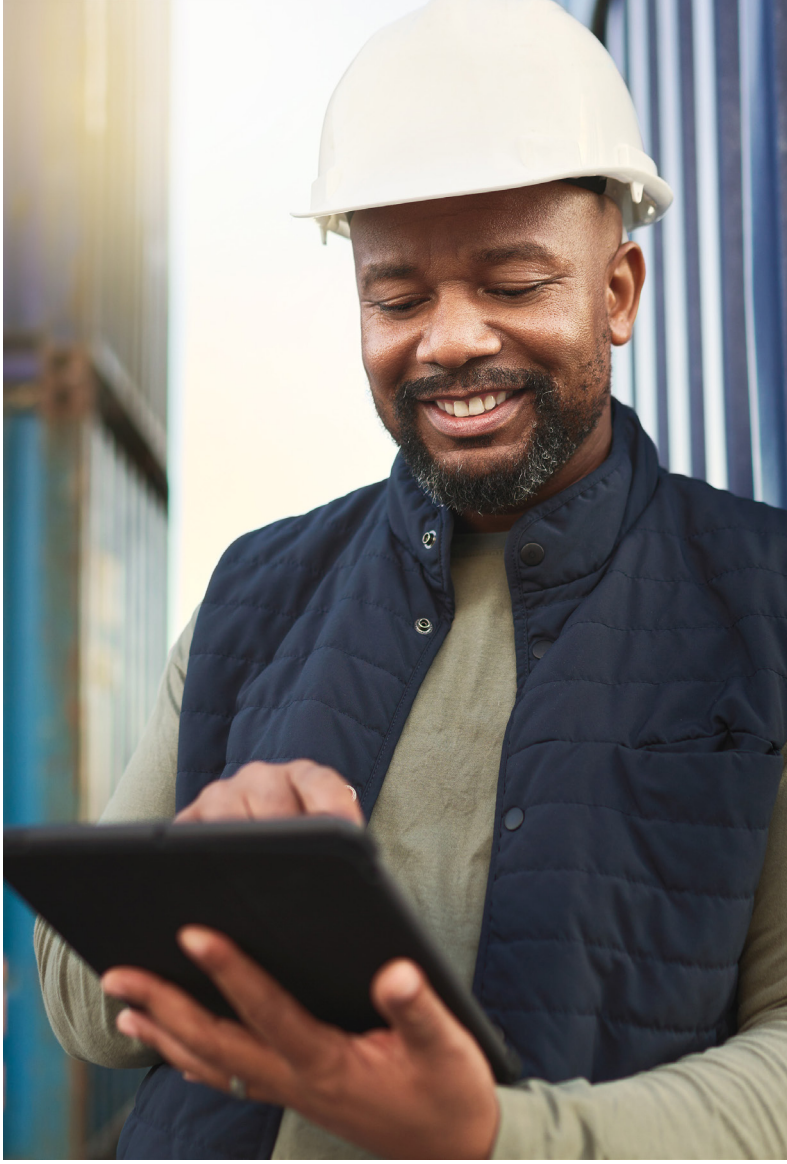

What is the instant testing saturation (sample adequacy) indicator?

Instant testing has a built-in saturation indicator that changes color when a sufficient sample has been collected. This mechanism eliminates completion time guesswork from the collection process and helps to reduce re-collections stemming from an insufficient oral fluid sample.

How does a test administrator conduct an instant oral fluid test with a donor?

The test administrator gives the swab to a donor and instructs them to sweep the inside of their mouth (cheek, gums, and tongue) several times. The donor will hold the swab in their closed mouth until the color on the saturation indicator strip appears in the indicator window of the swab. The donor must not suck or chew on the collection sponge. Additionally, the donor should not remove the sponge from their mouth during the collection. The collection is complete when the saturation indicator strip appears in the indicator window of the swab. When the strip appears, the donor can be instructed to remove the collection swab from their mouth by the test administrator. Last, the donor removes the collection swab from their mouth and hands it to the drug test administrator, or as indicated by the test administrator.

How long does an instant oral fluid test collection take to complete?

For 3-7 minutes, actively swab the cheeks, tongue, and gums while rotating the collection swab. Repeat until a red color appears on the saturation indicator strip.

Drug	6-panel kit	7-panel kit
Amphetamine	✓	✓
Cocaine (benzoylecgonine)	✓	✓
Marijuana (parent drug)		✓
Methamphetamine	✓	✓
Opiates (morphine)	✓	✓
Oxycodone	✓	✓
6-MAM (heroin metabolite)	✓	✓

How does a test administrator activate the oral fluid testing device for result interpretation?

The instant testing device should be placed on a flat surface and remain there for the duration of the test, enabling the oral fluid to migrate (wick) up the strips by capillary action. Moving the device, lifting it up, holding it, or tilting it back to read results may interfere with the reading and move the specimen away from the strips. It can also increase the likelihood of an invalid drug test result.

Once the oral fluid collector is locked into place, the collection swab is compressed and oral fluid is expressed, allowing the sample to flow to the test strips. After 2-3 minutes, the test administrator will check the instant testing device to ensure that lines are forming on all the drug test strips.

Oral fluid has a tendency to form air bubbles and may be viscous, which may prevent the test from wicking properly. If any of the test strips do not have lines beginning to form, check to verify that oral fluid is touching the bottom of all of the strips. If not, gently tap the instant testing device on the table or counter surface—DO NOT tilt the device while running—to promote oral fluid contacting all of the strips and test initiation.

How does a test administrator read test results using an instant testing device?

Negative drug test results using an instant testing device can be read as soon as both the test and control lines appear on the strip, typically within 2-3 minutes after test activation. At 10 minutes, the test administrator can interpret presumptively positive (no test line) or invalid test (no control line) results. Any indication of a line in the test region should be considered a line and thus a negative result. Results cannot be read after 20 minutes.

Why are some test (T) lines more faint than others?

The presence of a line, regardless of its intensity, is to be read as a negative result. Because of the chemical composition of certain drugs and metabolites, along with test strip chemistry, variation in cutoff levels for each drug, and expected variation in human donor specimens, it is normal for some lines to appear more intense (darker) than others. Any shade of color in the test "T" region should be read as a negative result.

How do I confirm a non-negative test result from an oral fluid instant test?

With our new Express Results Instant Oral kits, devices resulting in non-negative strips are sent to the Quest laboratory for confirmation.

What is considered an invalid result for instant testing?

Due to the occasional occurrence of low volume collections, we have included extra swabs in every box kit of 25 devices. In the event there is not enough oral fluid collected to saturate all of the instant test strips with the initial swab, one of the extra swabs may be used to collect additional oral fluid. If after this second swab is used and there still is not enough oral fluid to saturate the instant test strips, the test is considered invalid.

You may attempt a collection with another instant test kit or proceed with a lab-based urine or oral fluid collection.

What is the difference between oral fluid instant testing and a lab-based oral fluid test?

Instant testing utilizes a rapid oral fluid instant test device that delivers results for recent drug use in minutes. A lab-based oral fluid test is a laboratory-based oral fluid collection and testing system. Both feature an observed collection and technology to ensure a sufficient amount of oral fluid, or saliva, is collected for testing. With the introduction of our new Express Results Instant Oral test, both instant and lab-based oral fluid kits can be confirmed at the laboratory.

What factors should be considered when evaluating instant and lab-based oral fluid drug testing?

The criteria used for evaluating an instant versus laboratory-based oral fluid drug test include speed of a test result, window of drug detection, marijuana sensitivity, drug cutoff levels, legal considerations, convenience, and cost.

How is an instant testing test result reported?

Instant testing drug test results can be reported using several methods. For example, an employer can

- Record results on a multi-part paper form. In the event there is a non-negative result, this multi-part paper form can be sent to the lab for confirmation
- Record results in a digital file (PDF) or an organization's internal system
- Enter a result into the Quest Diagnostics drug testing portal called Employer Solutions Portal (ESP). Any non-negative results will need to be entered on a multi-part paper chain of custody form and sent to the lab for confirmation
- If using Remote Interpretation and a paperless chain of custody form, results will be reported in ESP and to the client via integration, dependent upon setup

Will the instant oral fluid test result be shared with a donor after the collection?

The decision to share a drug test result with a donor is determined by the employer's organization. In most cases, the donor is released from the collection area after the oral fluid specimen is collected and prior to interpreting the drug test result. This allows the process to continue and reduces unnecessary confrontation with a donor, especially if there is a non-negative result. Alternatively, organizations that prefer to complete the testing process with the donor present can release the donor if the instant testing screen indicates a negative result. While we recommend confirmatory testing, it's ultimately up to the employer to determine how to proceed.

What safeguards are built into the instant testing collection to help deter donor cheating and result tampering?

Because the oral fluid drug test collections are observed and collected in the presence of the employer's representative, cheating, tampering, or adulteration is difficult.

Is instant oral fluid drug testing permitted in the US?

Workplace drug testing laws vary by state in the United States. Consult an attorney to ensure that your state permits both oral fluid and instant drug testing.

How do I order instant oral fluid testing devices?

A Quest Diagnostics account number is required to order instant testing devices. Contact **1.800.877.7484** to set up your account and order instant testing drug testing kits.

How do I properly store instant testing devices?

Instant testing devices should be stored at 36 °F to 86 °F (2 °C to 30 °C) in their sealed foil package. If the product is refrigerated, an instant testing test device must be brought to room temperature **prior to opening the pouch**. Do not use an instant testing device after its expiration date.

How much does an instant oral fluid drug test cost?

Contact your Sales or Account Management representative for more information about instant oral fluid testing pricing.

If you have questions about instant oral fluid testing, contact your Sales or Account Management representative for more information, or call our national Customer Support center at **1.800.877.7484**.

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