



Cansford
Laboratories
Pioneering drug and alcohol testing

**A GUIDE TO
BLOOD
TESTING FOR
ALCOHOL**

INTRODUCTION

Blood testing offers an exceptional view into alcohol use, whether you're assessing **chronic patterns or recent consumption**. At Cansford, we use cutting-edge methods to detect alcohol in the blood, focusing on two of the most **reliable biomarkers** available: **PEth** (phosphatidylethanol) and **blood EtG** (ethyl glucuronide).



We use a **dry blood spot (DBS)** method to collect just a few drops of blood, quickly, virtually painlessly, and without the need for venous sampling.

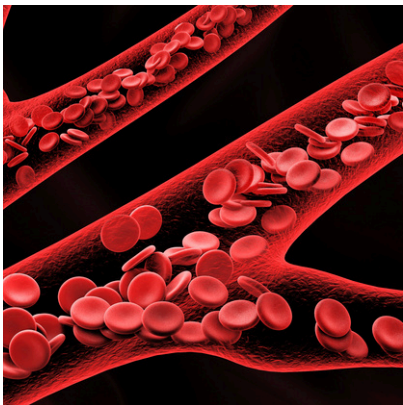
Cansford Labs was the **first UK laboratory** to develop PEth testing **in-house**, and we remain one of only few providers to do so. That means **quicker results and tighter quality control**, without compromising on accuracy.



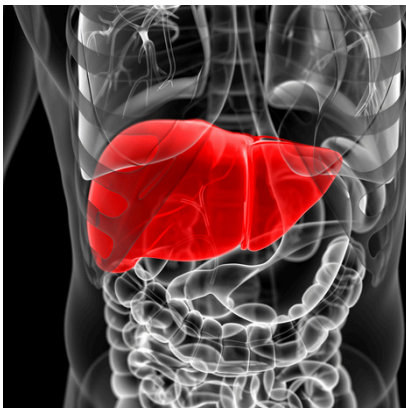
HOW BLOOD TESTING WORKS



When someone drinks alcohol, it's absorbed mainly through the stomach and small intestine. From there, it enters your bloodstream.



Once in the blood, alcohol is carried throughout the body to organs like the liver, where it starts to be broken down.



Your liver breaks most of the alcohol down, but small leftover traces form markers like EtG and PEth. These are like 'footprints' alcohol leaves behind.



EtG and PEth can be picked up in tests because they stay in your body longer than alcohol itself. These markers will not show unless alcohol has been ingested.

THE TIMELINE OF A SAMPLE



Every step is handled with precision to ensure the sample is ready for accurate and reliable analysis.

1



Each sample is taken with care, and securely packaged to maintain a clear chain of custody.

Once it reaches us, every sample is logged, barcoded and tracked through each stage, so no detail is missed.

2



Using our pioneering expertise and state of the art equipment, we test the sample for the requested biomarkers.

Our analysis gives us quantifiable results within a matter of hours.

3



Every test comes with a Certificate of Analysis as standard. But when you need more detail, our scientists can provide a comprehensive expert report, all delivered within our 3 working day turnaround time.

4

PEth IN DEPTH

PEth testing offers a **highly sensitive** and precise measure of alcohol consumption over the **three to four weeks** before sample collection. It's an effective tool for detecting alcohol use **patterns**, and can differentiate between **excessive, moderate, low, and no alcohol use**.

PEth testing with Cansford is **straightforward and discreet**. We collect a small blood sample using a **simple finger prick**, meaning no invasive procedures.



We can include **blood EtG testing** with every PEth analysis for **no additional cost**, which detects alcohol consumption in the **2-3 days** before the sample collection. This provides a more immediate picture of alcohol intake, **offering valuable context** for cases where recent use needs to be monitored or verified.

Our results are trusted by professionals across multiple industries, with **every sample analysed in-house** at our own Cardiff laboratory. This ensures full **control**, consistent **quality**, and results you can rely on to make **informed, confident** decisions.

EXPERT REPORTING

Clear and detailed, our expert reports are fully **court admissible**, providing everything you need to support your case.

Every test we conduct comes with a **certificate of analysis**, but when you need a more in-depth explanation, our qualified and court trained reporting scientists can provide a **comprehensive, written, expert report**. This includes a formal declaration of results, details on our reporting scientists' qualifications, and key information about the sample.

Following feedback from family law professionals, our reports were recently redesigned to meet the **highest standards of clarity and usability**.



ADMISSIBILITY, COSTS, AND ACCURACY

Admissibility of evidence

In public law cases, blood test results are admissible as evidence when the chain of custody is intact. Our witnessed, documented collection process and tamper-evident packs ensure this, allowing us to confirm the integrity of every sample.

In private law cases, where a test has been arranged independently, the results can only be used in court if permission is granted.



Who pays for testing?

In public law proceedings, the cost of blood tests may be covered by legal aid – but only if the test is carried out under the court's instructions. The Legal Aid Agency (LAA) is likely to withhold payment if conditions set by the court are not followed.

In private law cases, individuals are usually responsible for covering the cost themselves.

Timelines in care proceedings

Care proceedings in public law must be concluded within six months, meaning evidence needs to be gathered quickly. Blood testing can be completed by our lab within three working days of the sample reaching our lab.

CASE STUDY

In a family court dispute over child custody arrangements, concerns were raised about a parent's alcohol consumption. The other party alleged that the individual had a history of excessive drinking, which could impact their ability to care for their child safely.

The individual, confident that their drinking was under control, sought testing to provide a clear and accurate picture of their alcohol intake. Their solicitor arranged a PEth test with us—a highly sensitive and accurate method for detecting alcohol consumption over the past four weeks. Unlike traditional blood tests or breathalysers, which only show recent alcohol use, PEth testing measures direct alcohol biomarkers in the blood, providing a more accurate reflection of drinking patterns.



The test results showed PEth levels consistent with occasional alcohol consumption, supporting the individual's claim. With this evidence, they were able to demonstrate to the court that their alcohol use was not a concern, helping to resolve the case in their favour. Our PEth testing goes beyond a simple positive or negative result. We provide quantifiable data on alcohol intake, along with expert reports that consider wider factors to give a full and fair interpretation of the results.

ABOUT US

Award-winning, pioneering and **trusted**.

We offer accredited drug and alcohol testing that you can trust, at a speed others can't match.

Cansford can trace its roots back to 1993, when founders John Wicks and Lolita Tsanaclis developed the UK's first hair testing regime for drug and alcohol use. They pioneered the process which is now used common place across many industries and by many labs across the country.

From our bespoke, modern and bright laboratory in Cardiff, we offer a UK-wide testing service for individuals and organisations across family law, social care, education and the workplace – focused on exceptional care, quality, and upholding our record as the UK's fastest drug and alcohol-testing laboratory, with a three-working-day turnaround from sample receipt at the lab.





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