



**Cansford
Laboratories**
Pioneering drug and alcohol testing

HAIR TESTING FOR DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

Easy read version

WHAT IS THIS GUIDE?

This guide explains what a hair test is and what will happen.

It is written in simple language so it is easy to understand.

This guide is for you if:

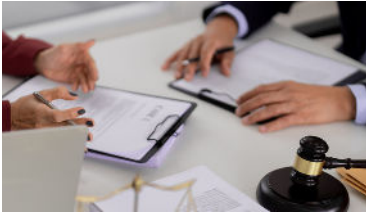
- ✓ A solicitor, social worker or case handler has asked you to take a hair test
- ✓ A court or official body has requested the test as part of a legal matter
- ✓ You have arranged the test yourself



Do not worry.
The test is quick and simple. It does not hurt.
This guide will explain what you need to know.

WHY AM I HAVING A HAIR TEST?

There are different reasons why someone might have a hair test.



It may be part of a legal case, a workplace matter, or a review of your situation.



Some people arrange a hair test on their own. This might be for personal reasons.



The test gives an honest picture of whether drugs or alcohol have been used, and when.

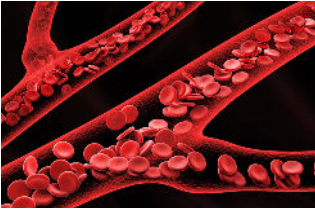
Whatever your reason, the process is the same.

The test is not a punishment.
It is simply a way to find out accurate information.
The results help give a clear and fair picture.

HOW HAIR TESTING WORKS



When a person takes drugs or drinks alcohol, it enters their blood.



The body then breaks it down into tiny chemical traces.



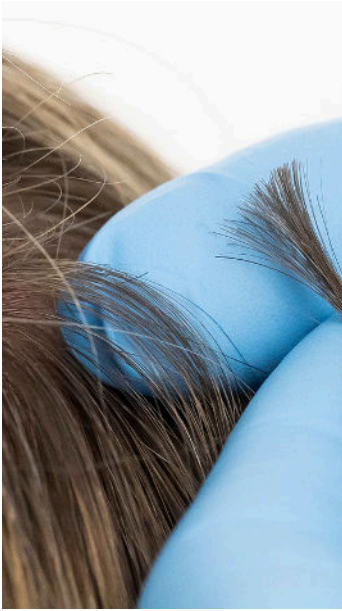
As your hair grows, these traces get locked inside the hair and stay there for a long time.



This means a hair test can show what happened over many months.

About 1 centimetre of hair grows each month. Scientists use this to look at different time periods.

WHAT HAPPENS AT MY APPOINTMENT?



A trained person will take a small amount of hair from your head.

It is cut from the back of your head.

It is a very small cut. You will not be able to see it.

If you do not have enough head hair, body hair can be used instead.

A sample form from Cansford Laboratories, showing fields for patient details, hair collection information, and a declaration. The form includes sections for 'PATIENT DETAILS', 'HAIR COLLECTION', and 'DECLARATION'. The Cansford Laboratories logo is visible in the top right corner.

The hair sample is put into a sealed, secure pack.

It is labelled with your details and sent safely to us.

Everything is kept safe and private.
Your sample is carefully tracked at every step so nothing gets mixed up or lost.

HOW LONG DOES THE TEST COVER?

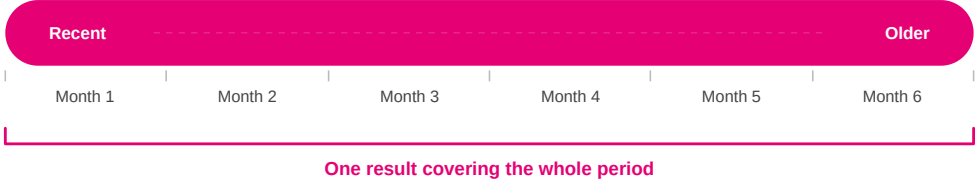
It depends on how long your hair is and what kind of test we do.

- For drugs the test can go back many months.
- For alcohol the test can go back up to 6 months.

We can also test the sample in two different ways:

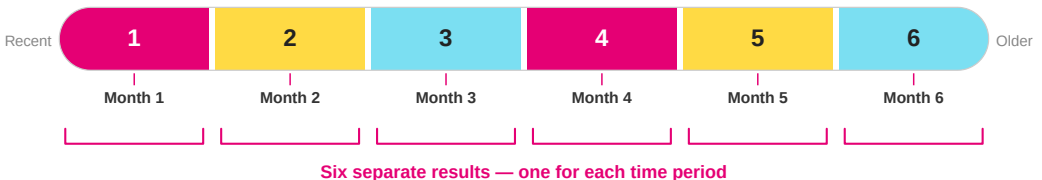
Overview test

The whole hair sample is read together — one result for the full time period



Section test

The hair is cut into sections — each gives a separate result for that time period



**Not sure which test you are having?
The person who arranged the test will know
which type has been ordered. You can ask them.**

WHAT WILL THE RESULTS SHOW?

The test does not just give a yes or no answer. It shows:



If drugs or alcohol were found in your hair



How much of each substance was present



Roughly when they were used



The scientists also check for medicines. If you take medication, this will show up differently to illegal drugs in the results.

If you take any medicine, let the person taking your hair sample know at your appointment. This makes sure the results are correct.

ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS

Will it hurt?

No. It is just a small cut of hair. It does not hurt at all.

Do I have to do the test?

If someone has arranged the test as part of a legal matter, refusing may affect your case. If you arranged the test yourself, it is your choice.

I only drink or use drugs sometimes. Will that show up?

The scientists look at how much was found. One-off or light use looks very different from regular heavy use.

What if my hair is very short or I have no head hair?

Body hair can be used instead — for example, from your arm or leg. It works in the same way.

I am nervous about the test. Is that okay?

It is normal to feel nervous. The appointment is straightforward and the person taking the sample is trained to make you feel comfortable.



Cansford Laboratories

Pioneering drug and alcohol testing



We are based in Cardiff, Wales and are one of the most trusted testing labs in the UK.

We are fully accredited. This means an independent organisation has checked our work and it meets very high standards.

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cansfordlabs.co.uk