

URINE ABSTINENCE TESTING AND INCIDENTAL ALCOHOL EXPOSURE

Recent advances in the science of alcohol detection in urine have greatly increased the ability to detect even trace amounts of alcohol consumption. In addition, these tests are capable of detecting alcohol ingestion for significantly longer periods of time after a drinking episode. Because these tests are sensitive, in rare circumstances, exposure to non-beverage alcohol sources can result in detectable levels of alcohol (or its breakdown products).

It is **your** responsibility to limit your exposure to the products and substances, including those detailed below, that contain ethyl alcohol. It is your responsibility to read product labels, to know what is contained in the products you use and consume and to stop and inspect these products **BEFORE** you use them. **Use of the products detailed below may result in a positive test which may be reported to the Board of Registration in Medicine and others named in your monitoring contract. When in doubt, don't use, consume or apply.**

Cough syrups and other liquid medications: It is important to avoid alcohol-containing cough/cold syrups, such as Nyquil®. Other cough syrup brands and numerous other liquid medications, rely upon ethyl alcohol as a solvent. Please be sure to read product labels carefully to determine if they contain ethyl alcohol (ethanol). Non-alcohol containing cough and cold remedies are readily available at most pharmacies and major retail stores.

Non-Alcoholic Beer and Wine: Although legally considered non-alcoholic, NA beers (e.g. O'Douls®, Sharps®) do contain a residual amount of alcohol that may result in a positive test result for alcohol, if consumed.

Food and Other Ingestible Products: There are numerous other consumable products that contain ethyl alcohol that could result in a positive test for alcohol. Flavoring extracts, such as vanilla or almond extract, and liquid herbal extracts (such as Ginko Biloba), could result in a positive screen for alcohol or its breakdown products. Communion wine, food cooked with wine, and flambé dishes (alcohol poured over a food and ignited such as cherries jubilee, baked Alaska) must be avoided. Read carefully the labels on any liquid herbal or homeopathic remedy as well.

Mouthwash and Breath Strips: Most mouthwashes (Listermint®, Cepacol®, etc.) and other breath cleansing products contain ethyl alcohol. The use of mouthwashes containing ethyl alcohol can produce a positive test result. Non-alcohol mouthwashes are readily available and are an acceptable alternative. If you have questions about a particular product, bring it in to discuss with your associate director.

Hand sanitizers: Hand sanitizers (e.g. Purell®, Germex®, etc.) and other antiseptic gels and foams used to disinfect hands contain up to 70% ethyl alcohol. Excessive or repeated use of these products could result in a positive urine test

Hygiene Products: Aftershaves and colognes, hair sprays and mousse, astringents, insecticides (bug sprays such as Off®) and some body washes contain ethyl alcohol. While it is unlikely that limited use of these products would result in a positive test for alcohol (or its breakdown products) excessive, unnecessary or repeated use of these products could affect test results. Participants must use such products sparingly and avoid breathing the fumes to avoid reaching detection levels.

Solvents and Lacquers. Many solvents, lacquers and surface preparation products used in industry, construction, and the home, contain ethyl alcohol. Excessive inhalation of vapors can potentially cause a positive test result for alcohol. As with the products noted above, it is important to educate yourself as to the ingredients in the products you are using. There are alternatives to nearly any item containing ethyl alcohol. Frequency of use and duration of exposure to such products should be kept to a minimum. If you are in employment where contact with such products cannot be avoided, *please discuss this with your associate director.* Do not wait for a positive test result to do so.

Remember! When in doubt, don't use, consume or apply.