

## What happens after the test?

You can resume your normal activities and your normal diet.

The samples are sent away to a laboratory for analysis. The results will be sent back to the doctor that referred you usually within two weeks.

There are no side effects to this test. If you notice any side effects please inform the GI physiology nurse or your doctor.

## Additional information

Parking for patients and visitors can be found on levels 0, 1, 2 and 3 of the multi-storey car park on Craven Road. The hospital car park fee for 3 hours is £4.50 and for 4 hours is £7. You do not need to take a ticket when you enter as your car will be registered with Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) and you do not need to display a ticket in your car. Pay before you exit or within 24 hours of exiting the car park. Pay machines can be found near the lifts on Level 0 and 2 and payment can be by cash, card or via the APCOA app.

We are happy to answer any questions you may have regarding this appointment. For further information about your procedure, please call the following number:

**GI Physiology Department** on  
**0118 322 7725** (office hours)

## Contacting us

GI Physiology Department

Tel: **0118 322 7725**

Email: [rbft.giphsiology@nhs.net](mailto:rbft.giphsiology@nhs.net)

To find out more about our Trust visit  
[www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

**Please ask if you need this information  
in another language or format.**

GI Physiology Department

Reviewed: December 2022

Next review due: December 2024



**Royal Berkshire**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Helicobacter pylori breath test

Information for  
adult patients

**GI Physiology Practitioners**  
**0118 322 7725**

---

**This leaflet explains what a Helicobacter pylori (H. pylori) breath test involves and how to prepare for it. If there is anything you do not understand, please ask a member of the GI Physiology team.**

---

## **What is a Helicobacter Pylori (H. pylori) breath test?**

The H. pylori breath test is a non-invasive, safe, painless and simple way to diagnose the presence of H. pylori, a bacterium that can be found in the stomach.

The test is performed either

- To confirm whether you are suffering from H. pylori infection to help diagnose your condition.
- To ensure eradication of the bacterium following treatment.

## **What does the test do?**

H. pylori breaks down urea into ammonia and carbon dioxide. The test is based on this unique feature of the bacteria.

Urea is a harmless substance found in food and in your body.

All foods contain a substance called carbon 13 (<sup>13</sup>C), in varying amounts. This <sup>13</sup>C can be detected in the carbon dioxide that you breathe out.

The actual amount of <sup>13</sup>C in the breath will depend on the type of food that you have eaten.

Urea that is high in <sup>13</sup>C is used in the test. Analysis of samples of your breath taken before and after consuming <sup>13</sup>C-Urea will show if the bacteria are present in your stomach.

## **How is the test performed?**

The test will take about 45 minutes. It is recommended that the breath test is performed while you are in a seated position.

The test requires you to drink a “test meal” This will help keep the test <sup>13</sup>C-Urea solution in your stomach

You will give samples of your breath by blowing into a set of tubes.

You will drink a small quantity of <sup>13</sup>C-Urea dissolved in water. This is a safe, colourless and tasteless liquid.

You will then be asked to sit quietly, without eating, drinking or smoking for 30 minutes.

Finally, you will give more samples of your breath to complete the test.

## **How do I prepare for the test?**

- You must not smoke during the test.
- Do not have anything to eat for **4 hours before the test**. During this time, drink only water. If fasting is a problem e.g. diabetic patient, please contact the nurse for advice.
- Do **not** take the following medications:
  - **ANTIBIOTICS** – stop 28 days before the test.
  - **PROTON PUMP INHIBITORS** (e.g. Nexium, Omeprazole, Lansoprazole) – stop 14 days before the test.
  - **ANTACIDS or Ranitidine** – do not take for three days before the test.

**Do not stop taking medication without the advice of your doctor.**

## **Please inform a member of staff if you have:**

- Taken ANTIBIOTICS within the last 28 days.
- Taken PROTON PUMP INHIBITORS within the last 14 days.
- Taken ANTACIDS or RANITIDINE on the day of the test.
- If you have diabetes.