

ASCLS Mission:

The mission of ASCLS is to make a positive impact in health care through leadership that will assure excellence in the practice of laboratory medicine.



**Your Safety and Service Experience
Are Important To Us!**

Laboratory Patient Safety Tips:

Hydrogen Breath Test





Your healthcare provider has asked you to have a hydrogen breath test. This information sheet tells you what the test is and how you need to prepare for it.

What is a Hydrogen Breath Test?
Some peoples' bodies are unable to properly process certain sugars, like lactose, fructose, glucose, sucrose and d-xylose. After drinking a certain amount of either a sugar solution or milk, bacteria in your intestine will ferment the sugars and produce hydrogen. The Hydrogen Breath test is a non-invasive way of collecting breath samples, and determining how much hydrogen was produced due to the presence of bacteria in the small intestine.

What should I do to prepare for the test?

- For 3 days before the test eat normally. If your doctor or dietician has prescribed a special diet you should discuss this with them.
- Only engage in your usual amount of exercise before the test.
- You should be in a fasting state beginning after midnight.

Fasting means you should NOT:

- eat any food
- drink any beverages except plain water
- chew gum
- exercise strenuously during the fasting period
- smoke



You should not stop your normal medications unless told to do so by your doctor.

To ensure that your test is done as scheduled, if you leave the area, please be in the Outpatient Laboratory Waiting area 10 minutes prior to your next scheduled sample collection. If any collection time has passed, please alert the Laboratory staff as soon as possible.

Hydrogen Breath Test FAQs:

What is the length (time) of test?

The hydrogen breath test requires breath samples to be collected at the time of arrival (prior to drinking the prescribed sugar solution) and timed intervals set by the laboratory lasting for a total of 3 hours.

What are my requirements during the test?

The laboratory asks that you remain near the Outpatient Laboratory during the duration of the test. You need to be able to alert staff if you feel ill during the test, and your provider may need to be called. You may drink water and use the restroom during the test but must refrain from chewing gum, smoking, and eating, including candy or mints. Please inform the laboratory staff if you become ill or experience diarrhea at any time during testing.

Why can't the laboratory test for more than one sugar at the same time?

The breath specimens that are sent to the laboratory after collection measure the hydrogen produced during fermentation by the bacteria in your small intestine, regardless of the sugar solution that was consumed. In order for your physician to pinpoint the sugar that is causing your problems, the laboratory needs to test each sugar separately with you fasting between each test.

