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| Drug screens |
| Information for parents |

This information sheet explains what drug screens are, and how the information they provide can make a difference when child protection is involved with your child.

## What are drug screens?

A drug screen is used to see whether or not a person has used drugs. For child protection purposes, this normally involves a person providing a urine sample under supervision. Child Protection’s pathology provider is Australian Clinical Laboratories (ACL). In certain circumstances you may be asked to undertake a breathalyser test to establish if you have consumed alcohol, or you may be asked to provide a blood or hair sample instead of a urine sample. If there isn’t an ACL collection site where you live you may be asked to go to a different provider.

### What happens when I go for a drug screen?

The child protection worker will tell you the ACL site you can go to. A list of all collection site locations is available on the department’s website and is updated monthly. This includes the time slot that you can attend. Please attend at least 15 minutes prior to the end of the collection site time slot. You will not be able to provide a urine sample for testing if you arrive outside of the time slot.

At the collection site, you need to provide photographic identification (photo ID) and a referral form from Child Protection. This photo ID must contain your name and date of birth in addition to your photograph. Accepted photo ID includes a driving licence, passport, proof of age card or a keypass card which you can get from Australia Post. This photo ID must be presented each time you attend to complete a drug screen. Photographs of photo ID contained on your mobile phone will not be accepted.

If you do not have photo ID, tell the child protection worker. As an interim arrangement the child protection worker can provide you with a letter confirming your identity. The letter will include, a photograph such as a passport photograph or photograph taken by the child protection worker. This will be accepted by collection site staff for a period of four weeks from when the letter is signed. After this time the letter will no longer be accepted and you must provide photo ID from the list above.

You will be asked to remove your coat, roll up your sleeves and a member of staff will remain with you whilst you provide the sample. This supervision is necessary to make sure the urine sample is not tampered with and is one of the roles of the collector. The supervision of screens is done privately and every effort is made to respect the person’s dignity. There is no cost to you for the drug screen.

The collection site you attend to complete the drug screen will be used by a wide variety of people in the community. You are expected to conduct yourself in a calm and reasonable manner. Staff at the collection site have the right to refuse to conduct a drug screen if they think a person’s behaviour is inappropriate, or if it is outside of the designated collection times. If any type of incident occurs, the collection site staff will follow their normal processes when dealing with an incident, which may include refusing you access to a particular site or calling Victoria Police.

#### What happens after the drug screen?

ACL will test the sample you have provided at their laboratory and advise the child protection worker of the result via a secure online database. The results will be discussed with you, shared with the Court where necessary and to the extent relevant, with the care team for your child (if one exists). Should your results need to be shared with anyone else, the child protection worker will tell you this. Child protection workers have guidelines around information sharing and privacy of clients and their families. Please ask the child protection worker if you want further information about this.

Drug screen results are recorded on your child’s case file. Only authorised workers are allowed access to your child’s record.

## What happens if I don’t complete a drug screen?

If you don’t complete a screen it’s difficult for child protection to complete their assessment and support you and your child if there is a concern about possible drug use. This is because drug use may impact on your ability to care for and protect the child in your care, or have your child returned to your care

If you have to provide drug screens as a condition of a Children’s Court order, it means this is a legal requirement and you must do this. If you don’t, the order can be breached for the Court to decide what will happen next.

## A summary of the key information

When completing a drug screen:

* This can only be done at the pathology provider on the referral form at the specified time. Please attend at least 15 minutes prior to the end of the time slot. You will not be able to provide a urine sample for testing outside of the allocated time slot.
* Photographic identification (ID) must be produced ***every*** time. If you don’t have photo ID tell the child protection worker. They will provide reasonable assistance to help you get photo ID, as letters provided by child protection confirming your identity is only valid for a period of four weeks.
* The drug screen is supervised by the collector at the collection site.
* A good standard of behaviour is expected, and it is important to treat collection site staff with respect. If any type of incident occurs, collection site staff may contact the police.
* Results from drug screens contribute to the overall assessment completed by child protection.
* You will be advised of the results of a drug screen by the child protection worker.
* Drug screens are supervised, transported, and tested by an accredited independent organisation that is paid for by child protection.

## Where can I get further information?

It is important you understand how drug screens can help you and your child and what this process involves. If you have any questions, please speak to your child’s child protection worker.

### Contact information

The child protection worker’s name is:

Their Department of Health and Human Services’

office is:

Their contact number is:

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