



Ethyl Glucuronide (EtG)

Ethyl Glucuronide (EtG) is a unique biological metabolite that is formed in the body after the consumption of ethanol (alcohol), typically from drinking alcoholic beverages. EtG has been reported to be detectable in the urine for approximately 8-80 hours after ingestion, and 2-36 hours in blood depending on the dosage.

EtG testing cannot be used to determine the level of intoxication, impairment, or the exact time the alcohol ingestion occurred. A client's age, gender, race, physical health, diet, metabolism, and time of the sample collection are but a few significant variables that can affect EtG detection.

Incidental exposure to alcohol is a concern when considering EtG testing. There are many health and food products that contain alcohol. The laboratory uses a cutoff level of 500 ng/mL to help ensure that normal exposure to products containing alcohol will not cause a positive test result. Unfortunately, this may not be successful in all situations. There are over-the-counter liquid medications such as Nyquil, which contain a high concentration of alcohol. It is possible that a client may test positive for EtG depending on the dosage and timeframe of using the product prior to testing. Alternatives may include liquid gel capsules or non-alcohol containing medications. Informing the client to abstain from this type of medication is key so that they understand the potential of a positive EtG result.

Other forms of incidental exposure may include prescription mouthwashes and hand sanitizers that contain alcohol. If these products are used as recommended, and not consumed, the client will not test positive for EtG at the 500 ng/mL cutoff level used by the laboratory. Food that has been cooked using alcohol should not pose a risk as the alcohol will have evaporated at elevated temperatures.

If you are interested in identifying alcohol consumption by your client it is recommended that the EtG test be added to the testing panel. Alcohol can only be detected in the urine for approximately 12 hours. The EtG test will allow for a wider window of detecting alcohol use. If a client contests a positive EtG screening test result, a confirmation test is highly recommended.

If there are any questions or concerns please contact the TASC Laboratory at (602) 257-7588