



Toxicology

Let's Talk Tox

A resource for drugs of abuse testing

Drug testing during pregnancy – Has the perspective changed in recent years?

The opioid epidemic observed across America has also resulted in increased opioid use during pregnancy. Substance use disorders affect women across all racial and ethnic and socioeconomic groups, and affect women in rural, urban, and suburban populations. Consequently, many experts favor universal screening rather than risk-based screening to avoid selection bias.

In the absence of evidence-based guidelines for drug screening, the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG) and the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) recommend all pregnant women be screened for substance use. In a 2017 joint opinion, the ACOG and ASAM endorsed universal screening of all pregnant woman at the first prenatal visit. Routine screening should rely on validated screening tools, such as questionnaires, including 4Ps (Parents, Partner, Past, Present) NIDA Quick Screen, and CRAFFT (for women 26

years or younger)¹

A study conducted in Massachusetts and published in 2021² concluded that “A sustainable and generalized process to carry out a substance use screening within a large prenatal practice is feasible and assisted with identification of patients not known to be at risk. Further efforts are needed to evaluate how to sustain health care practitioner documentation of intervention in response to



1. Committee on Obstetric Practice, American Society of Addiction Medicine. Opioid Use and Opioid Use Disorder in Pregnancy. ACOG Committee Opinion Number 711, August 2017 https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/committee-opinion/articles/2017/08/opioid-use-and-opioid-use-disorder-in-pregnancy?utm_source=redirect&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=otn

2. Implementation of a Universal Screening Process for Substance Use in Pregnancy, Obstetrics & Gynecology, Vol. 137, NO. 4, April 2021 p695-701 DOI: 10.1097/AOG.0000000000004305

You asked, Pat answered!



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What is the difference between EtG and EtS alcohol?

“EtG is an abbreviation for ethyl glucuronide a metabolite of ethanol consumption. EtS is Ethyl Sulfate a metabolite of ethanol consumption. They are both bio markers of ethanol use and can be detected much longer in the urine than ethanol.”

What are the cutoffs for EtG and EtS? Our program uses cutoff etg/ets at 100/25 ng/mL but I see others using cutoffs at 500/100 ng/mL.

“The issue you have using less than 500 ng/mL as a screen is incidental exposure. Research has shown use of mouth wash, hand sanitizer and food products containing ethanol will result in the detection of EtG in the urine at levels less than 500 ng/mL.”

The answers reflect the views of Pat Pizzo and not necessarily those of Thermo Fisher Scientific.



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