



Prescription and over-the-counter medications; and drugs testing

Drugs test results that you may hear of during the drugs testing process:

Negative	means that you do <u>not</u> have drugs in your system- you are negative for drugs in your body and this is a pass. This can be identified either at the point of contact test (POCT) or following laboratory analysis.
Non-negative	is only applicable for POCT. It means that within the sample you provided a substance was detected in your body, which is in line with the drugs testing panel used within Network Rail. However, your sample will need to be sent to a laboratory for analysis to confirm a result. A non-negative test is not a positive/fail result.
Positive	means you <u>do</u> have confirmed drugs in your body following laboratory analysis - you are positive for drugs in your body and this is a fail.

Some prescription drugs can give a non-negative D&A test result

There are a range of prescription and over-the-counter medications that can show as a non-negative drugs test. For example, diabetes medications, certain cough syrups and some prescription and over-the-counter pain relief medications. In most circumstances prescription or over the counter medication is taken for legitimate medical needs and under the care of a GP. However, some medications are abused due to their psychoactive effects and have addictive properties. For everyone's safety it's important that anyone who is unsafely taking or misusing prescription or over the counter medications be identified through the drugs and alcohol testing processes.

Some herbal remedies and substances, such as CBD oil, can also lead to a non-negative test, even if they have been prescribed for legitimate purposes. Specialist medical advice should be sought prior to using any herbal remedies or substances, especially if you are in a safety critical role.

How do I find out if any medication or substance I want to take, or I am currently taking, will have any effect on my safety and performance?

All employees in safety critical roles or PTS holders should seek clinical guidance for prescribed or over the counter medications from the [medication enquiry line](#) (Chemist on Call). Following this, you should disclose use to your line manager and discuss any advice you have received. In most cases an occupational health referral is also recommended to help establish any adjustments to role which should be considered both on the basis of the medications and any health conditions the medications are treating.

Employees in non-safety critical roles can seek guidance from the [medication enquiry line](#), however it is not mandatory. You are advised to disclose use to your line manager and where required seek clinical advice from occupational health.



What do I do if I am asked to take a D&A test and have taken medications?

The most important thing you must do when asked to complete a drugs test, is to tell the collection officer completing your test, of all the prescription medications you take, and any over-the-counter medications you have taken for up to two weeks prior to taking the test. The collection officer will ask you about any medications you have taken at the time of collecting your sample. These will then be recorded on a formal 'chain of custody' form which you will be asked to sign, to confirm the information you have provided is correct. Wherever possible, it is always best to provide the collection officer with a copy of your prescription medications, though this isn't mandatory.

If your POCT test comes back as a non-negative result, you will be informed straight away by the collection officer and your sample will be sent to the laboratory for further analysis. If you want to provide further details of the prescription or medications in relation to your test, you can send these by email to: toxex.urinequeries@abbott.com before your test result is confirmed.

What will happen to me if I show a non-negative drugs test?

Even where a non-negative test was expected due to declared medications, for example, declared tramadol use due to back pain, you will still be suspended from duties until your sample has undergone laboratory analysis to confirm the final test result. This is to ensure the safety of all. It may be for up to 7 days to confirm the result and you will receive full pay during this time. The Medical Review Officer, a highly trained and specialist in drugs results analysis, at the laboratory may want to contact you cross-check whether the medications you have taken are reflected in the sample analysis to help establish the cause for any non-negative readings.

Misuse of medications

The MRO will be able to tell if you are misusing prescription or over-the-counter medications by the levels and types of drugs found in your sample. Levels will be compared to the details provided by you on your prescription dosages and/or the over-the-counter medications you have declared taking.

If the MRO finds that:

- the sample shows inconsistency with the medications declared and the substances found in the sample
- prescription medications declared are not prescribed to you
- illicit substances that would not be reflective of any prescription or over the counter medications disclosed at the point of test
- significantly higher use of a drug than prescribed level or could be prescribed legally, or
- medications taken above the recommended dosages for over-the-counter medications



This could be reported as a confirmed positive test and not a negative result. In this case, you would be investigated, in line with the Disciplinary and Investigation processes, and could face disciplinary action.

Support is available for employees that have a drugs or alcohol misuse concern.

If you are a Network Rail employee, you should contact your manager, or the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) for information on our Drug and Alcohol Support Programme (DASP).

Further information is also available on MyConnect: [Drugs and Alcohol \(sharepoint.com\)](https://sharepoint.com)

If you are a contractor or supplier, you should contact your employer who should have support provisions in place.