

## Overview

### Useful For

Detection of in utero drug exposure up to 5 months before birth

Chain of custody is required whenever the results of testing could be used in a court of law. Its purpose is to protect the rights of the individual contributing the specimen by demonstrating that it was under the control of personnel involved with testing the specimen at all times; this control implies that the opportunity for specimen tampering would be limited. Since the evidence of illicit drug use during pregnancy can be cause for separating the baby from the mother, a complete chain of custody ensures that the test results are appropriate for legal proceedings.

### Additional Tests

Test ID	Reporting Name	Available Separately	Always Performed
COCH	Chain of Custody Processing	No	Yes

### Method Name

Liquid Chromatography-Tandem Mass Spectrometry (LC-MS/MS)

### NY State Available

Yes

## Specimen

### Specimen Type

Meconium

### Specimen Required

**Container/Tube:** Chain-of-Custody Meconium Kit (T653) includes the specimen containers, seals, and documentation required.

**Specimen Volume:** 1g (approximately 1 teaspoon)

**Collection Instructions:** Collect entire random meconium specimen.

### Additional Information:

1. Specimen that arrives with a broken seal does not meet the chain of custody requirements.
2. The laboratory recommends sending chain-of-custody specimens by overnight shipment.

### Forms

1. [Chain-of-Custody Request](#) is included in the Chain-of-Custody Kit (T282).
2. If not ordering electronically, complete, print, and send a [Therapeutics Test Request](#) (T831) with the specimen.

**Specimen Minimum Volume**

0.3 g (approximately 1/4 teaspoon)

**Reject Due To**

Other	Grossly bloody reject, Pink OK
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**Specimen Stability Information**

Specimen Type	Temperature	Time	Special Container
Meconium	Frozen (preferred)	21 days	
	Refrigerated	21 days	
	Ambient	72 hours	

**Clinical and Interpretive**

**Clinical Information**

Cocaine is an alkaloid found in *Erythroxylon coca*, which grows principally in the northern South American Andes and to a lesser extent in India, Africa, and Java.(1) Cocaine is a powerfully addictive stimulant drug. Cocaine abuse has a long history and is rooted into the drug culture in the United States,(2) and is one of the most common illicit drugs of abuse.(3,4) Cocaine is rapidly metabolized primarily to benzoylecgonine, which is further metabolized to *m*-hydroxybenzoylecgonine (*m*-HOBE).(1,5) Cocaine is frequently used with other drugs, most commonly ethanol, and the simultaneous use of both drugs can be determined by the presence of the unique metabolite cocaethylene.(4)

Intrauterine drug exposure to cocaine has been associated with placental abruption, premature labor, small for gestational age status, microcephaly, and congenital anomalies (eg, cardiac and genitourinary abnormalities, necrotizing enterocolitis, and central nervous system stroke or hemorrhage).(6)

The disposition of drug in meconium, the first fecal material passed by the neonate, is not well understood. The proposed mechanism is that the fetus excretes drug into bile and amniotic fluid. Drug accumulates in meconium either by direct deposition from bile or through swallowing of amniotic fluid.(7) The first evidence of meconium in the fetal intestine appears at approximately the 10th to 12th week of gestation, and slowly moves into the colon by the 16th week of gestation.(8) Therefore, the presence of drugs in meconium has been proposed to be indicative of in utero drug exposure during the final 4 to 5 months of pregnancy, a longer historical measure than is possible by urinalysis.(7)

Chain of custody is a record of the disposition of a specimen to document who collected it, who handled it, and who performed the analysis. When a specimen is submitted in this manner, analysis will be performed in such a way that it will withstand regular court scrutiny.

**Reference Values**

Negative

Positives are reported with a quantitative LC-MS/MS result.

Cutoff concentrations

Cocaine by LC-MS/MS: 50 ng/g

Benzoyllecgonine by LC-MS/MS: 50 ng/g

Cocaethylene by LC-MS/MS: 50 ng/g

*m*-Hydroxybenzoyllecgonine by LC-MS/MS: 50 ng/g

### Interpretation

The presence of any of the following: cocaine, benzoyllecgonine, cocaethylene, or *m*-hydroxybenzoyllecgonine, at > or =50 ng/g is indicative of in utero drug exposure up to 5 months before birth.

### Cautions

No significant cautionary statements

### Clinical Reference

1. Isenschmid DS: Cocaine. In Principles of Forensic Toxicology. Second edition. Edited by B Levine. Washington DC, AACCC Press, 2003 pp 207-228
2. US Drug Enforcement Administration: Cocaine. Retrieved 9/3/09. Available at URL: [www.usdoj.gov/dea/concern/cocaine.html](http://www.usdoj.gov/dea/concern/cocaine.html)
3. National Institute on Drug Abuse: NIDA InfoFacts: Crack and Cocaine. Retrieved 9/3/09. Available at URL: [www.nida.nih.gov/InfoFacts/cocaine.html](http://www.nida.nih.gov/InfoFacts/cocaine.html)
4. Isenschmid DS: Cocaine-effects on human performance and behavior. *Forsensic Sci Rev* 2002;14:61
5. Kolbrich EA, Barnes AJ, Gorelick DA, et al: Major and minor metabolites of cocaine in human plasma following controlled subcutaneous cocaine administration. *J Anal Toxicol* 2006;30:501-510
6. Kwong TC, Ryan RM: Detection of intrauterine illicit drug exposure by newborn drug testing. *National Academy of Clinical Biochemistry. Clin Chem* 1997;43:235-242
7. Ostrea EM Jr, Brady MJ, Parks PM, et al: Drug screening of meconium in infants of drug-dependent mothers; an alternative to urine testing. *J Pediatr* 1989;115:474-477
8. Ahanya SN, Lakshmanan J, Morgan BL, Ross MG: Meconium passage in utero: mechanisms, consequences, and management. *Obstet Gynecol Surv* 2005;60:45-56

### Performance

#### Method Description

Meconium is mixed with internal standard and broken down with acetic acid. The sample is then extracted with methanol and further processed by solid-phase extraction. The extract is analyzed by liquid chromatography-tandem mass spectrometry.(Unpublished Mayo method)

#### PDF Report

No

#### Day(s) and Time(s) Test Performed

Monday through Sunday; Varies

**Analytic Time**

2 days

**Specimen Retention Time**

2 weeks

**Performing Laboratory Location**

Rochester

**Fees and Codes****Fees**

- Authorized users can sign in to [Test Prices](#) for detailed fee information.
- Clients without access to Test Prices can contact [Customer Service](#) 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Prospective clients should contact their Regional Manager. For assistance, contact [Customer Service](#).

**Test Classification**

This test was developed and its performance characteristics determined by Mayo Clinic in a manner consistent with CLIA requirements. This test has not been cleared or approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

**CPT Code Information**

80353

G0480 (if appropriate)

**LOINC® Information**

Test ID	Test Order Name	Order LOINC Value
COKMX	Cocaine and metabolite Conf, CoC, M	69008-1

Result ID	Test Result Name	Result LOINC Value
36166	Cocaine	69009-9
36167	Benzoylecgonine	69010-7
36168	Cocaethylene	69011-5
36169	m-Hydroxybenzoylecgonine	69012-3
36170	Interpretation	69050-3
36171	Chain of Custody	77202-0