



Helicobacter pylori breath test

The *Helicobacter pylori* breath test examines your breath for the presence of *Helicobacter pylori*, a bacterium that can cause stomach ulcers.

The test requires you to take a gelatin capsule containing maize starch microspheres impregnated with ^{14}C -urea (a low dose radioactive substance).

The amount of radioactivity you will be exposed to is similar to the normal background radiation dose we are all exposed to in a normal day.

You are required to swallow the gelatin capsule with 20ml of water, and then wait 3 minutes before swallowing another 20ml of water. After a total of 10 minutes, you will be required to breathe into a balloon until it is inflated.

[See patient preparation instructions overleaf](#)



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Patient preparation

1. Some medications may interfere with this test. Please see the table below for medications to avoid. Always talk to your doctor before stopping any medication.

Period	Category	Medication
6 hours	Antacids H2 Antagonists	Mylanta, Gaviscon Tagamet, Zantac
7 days	Proton Pump Inhibitors	Zoton, Losec, Somac, Pariet, Nexium
14 days	Cytoprotectives	Sucralfate
30 days	Antibiotics	Flagyl, Amoxil, Klacid, Rulide Tetracyclines

2. You are required to fast for at least 6 hours prior to the test. No food or water is to be consumed during this period. This test can be performed in the afternoon, following adequate fasting.
3. You cannot smoke for 6 hours prior to the test, and for the duration of the test.

This test can be performed at any Melbourne Pathology collection centre. Please check www.mps.com.au for collection centre locations and opening hours.

This test is considered safe in pregnancy and childhood as the radiation dose is not much more than background and less than the radiation dose in an average airline flight. However if you are pregnant or think you might be pregnant, please consult with your doctor prior to taking the test.