

# Latest developments in alcohol testing and monitoring

Due to advances in research, technology, and techniques, **AlphaBiolabs** can now offer alcohol testing for head hair samples that are just 1cm in length

This means that even if your client only has 1cm of head hair, we will still be able to test it for levels of the ethyl glucuronide (EtG) direct biomarker. This can then be reported as excessive use of alcohol, or as a negative result. If the head hair is less than 1cm in length, we can test body hair, fingernails or toenails.

## What is head hair alcohol testing?

Hair strand alcohol testing is one of the most effective ways of determining whether an individual has been drinking alcohol in excess for up to 6 months. When used in conjunction with other tests, such as blood alcohol tests, it can help paint a complete picture of a person's historic alcohol consumption.

## Alternative alcohol testing samples

If the length of head hair is less than 1cm, body hair or nails can also be used to test for the presence of EtG.

Due to the slower rate at which body hair grows, body hair (e.g. from the arm, chest or leg) could provide up to a 12-month overview of alcohol use. A nail test for alcohol can show abstinence during an approximate 6-month period for fingernails or 12-month period for toenails, by identifying whether EtG is present in the sample.

Both body hair and nail testing for alcohol should also be supported by one or more blood tests.

## Combining hair alcohol testing with blood alcohol tests to give a fuller picture

We strongly recommend combining hair or nail alcohol testing with blood alcohol testing to give a fuller picture. There are 4 blood alcohol tests that can be used for legal purposes, which provide a 4-week overview of alcohol use or pathological changes due to long term excessive alcohol use:

- ▶ Phosphatidylethanol (PEth)
- ▶ Carbohydrate Deficient Transferrin (CDT)

- ▶ Liver Function Test (LFT)
- ▶ Mean Corpuscular Volume (MCV)

CDT, LFT and MCV are all indirect biomarkers of alcohol and their presence can be affected by pre-existing medical conditions and medications, among other factors. However, PEth is a far superior test as it is a direct biomarker of alcohol (it possesses the unchanged ethyl group of alcohol in contrast to the indirect blood markers). This means that PEth is only present in the body when alcohol has been consumed and is therefore without doubt the best blood testing option for the most accurate and reliable result.



## SCRAM CAM® Continuous Alcohol Monitoring ankle bracelet

SCRAM CAM® Continuous Alcohol Monitoring can be used as an alternative to, or complement our alcohol testing services. It is increasingly used as a transitioning measure where historical alcohol testing has already been undertaken, but ongoing drinking behaviour needs to be monitored.

It is also particularly beneficial over the festive season, as it can help provide

reassurance during periods of childcare arrangements.

- Key benefits include:
- ▶ A comprehensive profile of a participant's drinking activities
  - ▶ Transdermal method of detection with readings every 30 minutes, 24 hours a day, seven days a week
  - ▶ Weekly or monthly court-approved reports provided by our dedicated SCRAM team
  - ▶ Notification of any alcohol consumption within 24 hours of the event being confirmed
  - ▶ The tamper proof bracelet is fitted within two days at your chosen location, subject to your client's availability

## Where can I get an alcohol test or a SCRAM CAM® ankle bracelet for my clients?

Our UKAS 17025-accredited DNA, Drug & Alcohol testing laboratory offers court-approved testing for legal professionals and social workers, with fast turnaround times and expert reporting.

Our nationwide network of professional sample collectors are trained to collect a variety of samples under chain of custody, including hair, nails and blood for alcohol testing. We also offer alcohol monitoring using SCRAM CAM® and free sample collection for legally-instructed tests from our 13 walk-in centres across the UK and Ireland: <https://www.alphabiolabs.co.uk/find-walk-in-centres>

For more information or a quotation, contact our Legal New Enquiry team on 0333 600 1300, email [testing@alphabiolabs.com](mailto:testing@alphabiolabs.com) or request a quotation online at <https://www.alphabiolabs.co.uk/legal-test-forms/>

**Legal professionals can claim 15% off AlphaBiolabs' alcohol testing or SCRAM CAM® until 31 December 2023.**

Simply cite **ALCS15** when requesting your quote.

**Marie Davies, Toxicology Reporting Manager at AlphaBiolabs**, is a highly skilled forensic scientist with over 22 years' experience.



Prior to joining the business in 2022, she spent over 10 years as a Reporting Officer at the Forensic Science Service, and 12 years as a Reporting Scientist specialising in the interpretation of hair, nail, blood oral fluid test results. Marie holds a BSc with Honours in Genetics, a PGDip in Medical Toxicology, and a diploma in Trichology.

**AlphaBiolabs™**