



A GUIDE BY



WORKPLACE  
SAFETY SCREENINGS

# ORAL FLUID TESTING MYTHS GET BUSTED

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## THE FACTS ABOUT ORAL FLUID TESTING

There's plenty of misinformation regarding the science of drug testing floating around the Internet. For those new to workplace health and safety, sorting through this misinformation and getting to the facts can be difficult. This is the case with less common forms of testing, in particular, such as oral fluids testing.

Workplace Safety Screenings has used oral fluid testing for more than a decade to eliminate drug test cheating, perform on-site testing, and provide reliable results to employers. In recent years, our team of testing specialists has heard the same questions time and time again. This guide explains the facts behind the most common oral fluid testing myths.

## MYTH #1:

### Oral Fluid Testing is Inaccurate

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#### FACT

Oral fluid testing is no less accurate than the most common form of drug testing, urine testing. The results of oral fluid testing offer information that can help employers understand the effects of drug abuse, assess job performance, and determine safety risks. Positive test results in oral fluid drug tests are most often related to the amount of the drugs found in the bloodstream at the time of collection.

In fact, oral fluid testing provides a “blood-equivalent” result. This is due to how oral-fluid molecules similar to those found in blood plasma are measured. Compared to urine testing, positivity rates are often higher.

Technology advancements have impacted oral fluid testing in more ways than one. It’s now possible to more accurately quantify drug test results through advancements in both the collection device used in oral fluid testing and in laboratory tests used to screen for drugs.

## MYTH #2:

### Oral Fluid Testing is Not Efficient

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#### FACT

Most of us understand how urine testing works. This is one of the reasons why the myth of oral fluid testing being complicated and inefficient exists—it’s not as widely known, and new technology can seem complicated. The fact is, oral fluid testing is one of the simplest methods of testing.

For many employers and employees, it can reduce the need for urine testing, removing much of the yuck factor of handling urine. The process is also considered less invasive by many employees, requires less training for health and safety professionals, and can be easily and quickly conducted at any location. The collection can take place in any private room—a bathroom is not needed.

In terms of time, oral fluid testing can be more efficient in that it is often conducted on-site. This reduces employee downtime and reduces the risk of employees going off-site on the clock. The testing is also never slowed down by employees’ claims of shy bladder.

## MYTH #3:

### Oral Fluid Testing is Easily Cheated

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#### FACT

Oral fluid testing is nearly tamper-proof. In order to reduce the risk of cheating urine tests, many precautions must be taken in order to prevent it. These precautions include putting blue dye in toilet water, management supervision, occasional retests, and observed collections, which all add to the costs of drug testing.

Oral fluid testing significantly reduces the opportunity for tampering. Every oral fluid specimen collection can be observed, making it difficult for cheating to occur. In addition, synthetic urine can be found on hundreds of websites—not the case with saliva.

## MYTH #4:

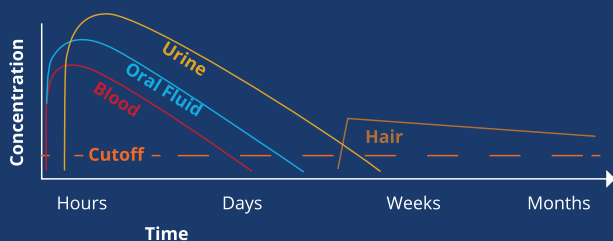
### The Window of Detection is Too Short

#### FACT

The transfer of drugs from the blood to oral fluid occurs while a drug is still in the bloodstream. This means detection times start within minutes of ingestion and continue for as long as the drug remains in the bloodstream. When compared to urine testing, oral fluid testing is just as effective during a similar time period.

The window of detection is long enough for of drug testing circumstances in the workplace, although detection times can be affected by the drug being tested and even an individual's metabolism. All forms of drug testing timeframes can be affected by many factors:

- Drug being detected
- Dosage amount
- How the drug was administered
- Acute vs. chronic use
- Drug cut-off levels
- Concentration of the fluid



#### COMPARES:

- Hair
- Oral Fluid
- Urine
- Blood

## MYTH #5:

### Oral Fluid Testing is Illegal in the U.S.

#### FACT

Oral fluid testing is legal in nearly every state, including in Texas. Oral fluid testing is used by a wide variety of industries across the U.S., including by law enforcement, mental health agencies, public and private drug treatment programs, drug courts, and more.

There are, however, some restrictions in certain states that apply to oral fluid testing. The creator of your drug-free workplace program will be well-versed in these restrictions in order to ensure you are completely compliant with state and federal regulations.

#### WHERE IS ORAL FLUID TESTING RESTRICTED?

- Hawaii
- Kansas
- Maine
- Minnesota
- Puerto Rico
- Nevada
- Vermont
- New York





## MYTH #6:

### Oral Fluid Testing is Too Complicated to Implement

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#### FACT

Making the switch to or adding oral fluid testing to your drug-free workplace programs is easier than you think. Oral fluid can easily fit into most existing drug-free programs, as it is less invasive compared to urine or blood testing. The collection process is easier, as well, so many employees and supervisors may favor it. It can also be collected in nearly any work environment, industry, and circumstances.

There are a few steps that must be completed in order to add oral fluid testing to your program, all of which your drug test provider can handle or help complete. These steps include:

- Identifying your objective for oral fluid testing, as with any other form of testing
- Updating your drug-free workplace program and policy
- Determining a method of collection, such as choosing supervisors to be trained or using specialists
- Training supervisors to understand how the program works and when it should be implemented
- Working with your vendor to ensure they're set up and aware of your policy updates
- Ensuring the integrity of the program using confirmation testing
- Announcing the new program to all employees

Workplace Safety Screenings is Houston's trusted provider of oral fluid testing. For a consultation and custom quote, contact us today.

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