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# Oral Fluid, Urine or Hair Testing? POC vs Lab? How Do You Choose?

## Figure out your reason for drug testing, and the test choice is a No Brainer!

**There are several types of drug tests:** Preliminary rapid tests, also known as Point-Of-Care or Point-of-Collection tests (POC) include urine, oral fluid, and hair. They are used to give an initial result (called a presumptive result) confirmed by an additional laboratory test. You may skip the preliminary tests and send samples straight to a laboratory, although this is more expensive, and results are not immediately available.

## Asking the “Why” question will determine which test is best for you to use.

Why are you testing? Are you part of a compliance program (probation and drug treatment)? Are you doing pre-employment screening? Are you performing a random employee test or post-accident test? Or is drug use suspicion (for cause) driving testing?

One of the main questions that needs to be answered is “How far back do you want to test” and that will help determine which type of test to use. This is referred to as the Window of Detection.

Is it important for you to understand lifestyle choices or patterns of use prior to hiring? If so, hair testing is a great choice with its longer window of detection of multiple months, dependent upon the length of the hair.

**Urine testing** has been used for many years and is probably best understood. With a window of detection of 5-7 days it is definitely a good choice for random testing or pre-employment where longer-term use information is not needed.

Is it critical to test individuals for recent use, perhaps in a safety critical environment prior to work, or even following accidents/incidents? Do you need a solution for suspicion testing? Oral fluid is a great choice in these circumstances with its relatively short window of detection of approximately 24-48 hours. With oral fluid testing a positive drug test result in these scenarios indicates recent use. Oral fluid testing is convenient because there aren't any privacy concerns. Tests are done on the spot, right in front of the person taking the test, and the donor.

## Why do you need to use lab testing if there are POC tests available for all scenarios?

POC tests give a fast result indicating the presence or absence of drug and are particularly suitable when you need to make immediate hiring decisions, or for the safety of your workplace. Results are qualitative, indicating that a drug is present at or above the cutoff level. A negative POC test expedites the onboarding process as you don't have to wait for the lab confirmation.

However, to ensure a legally defensible result for a positive POC test in a workplace setting the application of a confirmation test is critical. Lab testing is more sensitive with generally lower cutoffs than POC tests and results are quantitative, determining the amount of drug present.

Refer to the table on the next page for a helpful quick reference guide.

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## Summary of Test Choice by Testing Scenario

Test Methodology	Sample Matrix	Pre-Employment	Random	Post-Accident	Suspicion (for cause)
POC	Urine	✓	✓		
POC	Oral Fluid		✓	✓	✓
POC	Hair	✓			
Lab	Urine	✓	✓		
Lab	Oral Fluid		✓	✓	✓
Lab	Hair	✓			

Remember, whatever test type you use, it is important to make sure your workplace policy is clear and transparent to your employees. In addition, your program must comply with state and federal laws.

Unsure how to do this? We can help. Reach out to your local sales representative today or contact our customer services team at [wondfousa.com/contact](https://wondfousa.com/contact)

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Lab	Hair	✓			