

Barbiturates (screen) (serum)

Description	Barbiturates are synthetic derivatives of barbituric acid. They can be used as hypnotics, sedatives, anticonvulsants and anaesthetics.
Indication	To assess barbiturate abuse or overdose.
Additional Info	<p>Barbituric acid is formed by combining malonic acid and urea, with the elimination of 2 water molecules. The different properties of the various barbiturates depend upon the side groups attached to the ring. These are short mid and longterm actions.</p> <p>Thiopental is ultra short and can induce unconsciousness with minutes.</p> <p>Amobarbital, pentobarbital and secobarbital are short to intermediate acting and Phenobarbital (Luminal) is a barbiturate with longterm action.</p> <p>The mechanism of action of barbiturates is via depression of the central nervous system and inhibition of nerve response centres. There is a very narrow margin between therapeutic drug levels and toxicity.</p>
Concurrent Tests	Urine drugs of abuse screen (if applicable).
Dietary Requirements	N/A
Interpretation	UK workplace testing threshold: 200 µg/L (UKNEQAS data)
Collection Conditions	N/A
Frequency of testing	Barbiturate screening is not included as part of the routine screening for drugs of abuse as barbiturate abuse is relatively uncommon. Screening for barbiturates will only be performed if specifically requested.