

Ethanol

Description	Ethanol measurements are used in the diagnosis and treatment of alcohol intoxication and poisoning. No chain of custody is provided so these results CANNOT be used for legal purposes.
Indication	Suspected intoxication and forensic examination.
Additional Info	When alcohol is consumed it is absorbed by the stomach and intestine, and carried throughout the body in the bloodstream. Small amounts of ethanol are removed by the kidney in urine or breathed out from the lungs, but the majority is metabolised by the liver. Alcohol is poisonous to the liver. With the help of enzymes, the liver oxidizes the alcohol to acetaldehyde, then to acetate, and then finally to carbon dioxide and water. The liver can process about one drink an hour – with one drink being defined as the amount of alcohol in 250 mL (half a can) of beer, 80 mL (half a 175 mL glass) of wine, or a measure (25 mL) of whisky. A person who drinks more than 1 drink an hour will build up ethanol in their blood stream.
Concurrent Tests	Methanol and ethylene glycol may also be required in the investigation of toxicity indicated by abnormal osmolality.
Dietary Requirements	N/A
Interpretation	The current legal driving limit is 800mg/L (equivalent to 17.4mmol/L).
Collection Conditions	Do not use alcohol swap at site of venipuncture.
Frequency of testing	As required