

**Fact sheet**

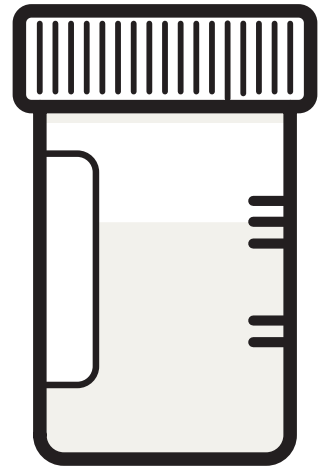
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# Blood in Urine (Haematuria)

Haematuria (heem-a-turia) is the presence of a high number of red blood cells in the urine. If you notice bright red blood in your urine, or your urine has turned pink, red or brown because it has blood in it, you should see your doctor straight away.

Sometimes urine may contain small amounts of blood that are only able to be detected using a special urine test. This is called **microscopic haematuria**. This also needs to be investigated further by your doctor, as healthy urine should not contain any blood in it.

Sometimes if you eat food with a large amount of food colouring, it can change the colour of your urine. Some medications can also make your urine change colour. In women, small amounts of blood may appear in urine during their period.



## Common causes of blood in urine

These include:

- exercise, sexual intercourse or injury
- infection of your bladder, urinary tract, kidney, prostate - can also cause a burning pain when you urinate, pain in your **abdomen**, and fever
- kidney stones - can sometimes block one of the tubes coming from your kidneys and cause severe abdominal pain
- an enlarged prostate gland - a common condition in older men that may also cause problems such as difficulty urinating and a frequent need to urinate
- kidney disease - such as **glomerulonephritis, thin-membrane disease, or Alport's syndrome**
- bladder, kidney or prostate cancer - usually affects adults aged over 50 and can also cause symptoms such as difficulty urinating, pain when urinating, a frequent need to urinate, and pain in your abdomen.

## Finding the cause of blood in urine

When it is confirmed that you have haematuria, your doctor may ask for a detailed medical history. This may include previous urine tests and risk factors for bladder, kidney and urinary tract cancer. A physical examination may also be carried out.

Your doctor may order further tests, such as:

- a blood pressure check
- blood tests
- a **urinalysis**, which is an examination of a sample of urine
- a urinary tract **ultrasound**.

If a source of bleeding cannot be found in your kidneys, further tests may be needed, such as:

- **spiral computed tomography (CT)**, which is a special type of x-ray
- **urine cytology**, which is a test to look for abnormal cells in your urine.

## How is a urinalysis done?

You will be given special instructions regarding the collection of urine for a urinalysis. This will include:

- the type of container to use - you may be provided with a special container
- the time of day to collect the sample - usually first urine of the morning
- what part of the urine stream to collect - the start, end, or all of it.



## How is blood in urine tested?

Some causes of blood in urine do not need any treatment, while other causes may be serious. It is important to see your doctor if you notice blood in your urine, as any treatment will work better if it is detected and diagnosed as soon as possible. Test results help determine the most appropriate management options and whether a referral to a specialist is needed.



### THINGS TO REMEMBER

- If you notice bright red blood in your urine or it has turned pink, red or brown because it has blood in it, you should see your doctor straight away.
- If you are diagnosed with haematuria, your doctor will likely look at your medical history and order further testing to identify the cause.
- Some haematuria may be serious and will require treatment and management so early detection is important.

## What does that word mean?

**Abdomen** - The part of the body that contains the pancreas, stomach, intestines, liver, gallbladder and other organs.

**Alport's syndrome** - A genetic kidney disease which affects your kidneys, hearing and eyesight.

**Glomerulonephritis** - A type of kidney disease that damages the tiny filters in the kidneys. It is sometimes called nephritis.

**Microscopic haematuria** - When blood in the urine is detected by using a special urine test.

**Spiral computed tomography (CT)** - A procedure that uses a spiral x-ray machine to create a series of detailed images of areas within your body.

**Thin-membrane disease** - A rare genetic disorder that affects the glomeruli (filters) inside the kidneys.

**Ultrasound** - An imaging procedure that uses sound waves to show structures and functions inside your body.

**Urinalysis** - When a sample of urine is collected and examined to detect for any unusual characteristics.

**Urine cytology** - When the cells from a sample of urine are examined to identify any abnormal characteristics.

For more information about kidney or urinary health, please contact our free call Kidney Health Information Service (KHIS) on 1800 454 363.

Or visit our website [kidney.org.au](http://kidney.org.au) to access free health literature.

This is intended as a general introduction to this topic and is not meant to substitute for your doctor's or health professional's advice. All care is taken to ensure that the information is relevant to the reader and applicable to each state in Australia. It should be noted that Kidney Health Australia recognises that each person's experience is individual and that variations do occur in treatment and management due to personal circumstances, the health professional and the state one lives in. Should you require further information always consult your doctor or health professional.



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