

Ordered to Take a Drug or Alcohol Test for Court? Read This First.

If a court has ordered drug or alcohol testing in your custody or parenting case, a lot is riding on it — this is about your time with your child. The testing itself is simple, as long as it's done correctly. Below are the questions parents ask us most, and the answers that keep a result from being wasted.

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Can I just go to my doctor or a walk-in clinic?

Be careful — this is the most common and costly mistake. A drug test at your doctor's office or a walk-in clinic is built for medical care. It's usually cheaper and easier, which is exactly why people reach for it.

But a courtroom is not a doctor's office, and a test that's perfectly fine for your physician can be worthless in front of a judge. If the sample isn't collected and handled under strict legal procedures, the court can refuse to accept it at all — and you'll have spent your money and time for nothing.

If I pass, doesn't that settle it?

Not on its own. Even a clean result won't help you if the court can't rely on it.

If there's no proof that the sample was really yours, that no one tampered with it, and that it was handled properly from start to finish, the other side can challenge it — and a judge can throw it out. A result only works in your favor when it's done right.

Is one drug or alcohol test as good as another?

No. There's no single "best" test. Different tests look back over different stretches of time and answer different questions — one that's ideal for showing months of sobriety is the wrong tool for detecting last weekend, and an alcohol test that misses recent drinking can give a falsely reassuring result.

The right test has to match what the court is actually asking. Getting that wrong can produce a result that's misleading or useless — even if you've done nothing wrong.

What does "done correctly" actually mean?

A court-ready test follows a careful, documented process: your identity is verified, your sample is sealed in front of you, and every step — collection, transport, and lab analysis — is tracked and recorded.

That paper trail is called the **chain of custody**, and it's what tells a judge the result is real and hasn't been tampered with. Without it, the result is just a piece of paper anyone can argue with.

How quickly do I need to do this?

Don't wait. Court orders usually come with a deadline. The worst outcome is going to the wrong place, taking the wrong test, learning it doesn't count, and having to start over against the clock — which can make it look like you're stalling, even when you're not.

A few minutes spent getting it right the first time saves you all of that.

Do I have to live near a testing center?

No. TrueTest Labs handles court-ordered testing every day. We work from the exact wording of your court order, help confirm the right test is being done, and find a convenient, approved collection site near you — there are thousands across the country, so you won't have to travel far.

You show up, show your ID, and give your sample. We handle the rest — properly, and on the record.

What should I do first?

Talk to us before you take any test.

We don't make results say anything — we make sure they're done correctly so they hold up. That's what protects you. A short conversation before you test can save you from a result that doesn't count.

Before you test, talk to us first.

A few minutes on the phone can keep you from a result the court won't accept.

Call (847) 258-3966 or ask your attorney to contact TrueTest Labs.

Working with an attorney or guardian ad litem? They may find our [detailed testing guide for family-court counsel](https://truetestlabs.com/family-court-drug-alcohol-testing-guide/) (https://truetestlabs.com/family-court-drug-alcohol-testing-guide/) useful — it covers how to match the test to the legal question and how to read a result for what it actually shows.

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