

OPIATE DETECTION IN DRUG TESTING

HEADACHES AND POPPY SEEDS

Randox Testing Services apply cut-off concentrations as recommended by the European Workplace Drug Testing Society (EWDTS) to distinguish a positive result from a negative result. EWDTS recommends a cut-off concentration of 300 ng/ml in urine for the opiates: codeine, morphine and dihydrocodeine. It is possible that therapeutic amounts of prescription or over-the-counter medications (UK / Ireland) containing an opiate-type drug, or even the ingestion of poppy seeds in food products, may afford a positive drug test result for one or more opiates.

OPIATE ANALGESICS

CODEINE:

Available in numerous over-the-counter proprietary preparations in combination with paracetamol, ibuprofen or aspirin (for example, Solpadeine Max or Nurofen plus). Co-codamol is a combination of codeine and paracetamol available in 3 strengths of codeine, the lowest of which is available over-the-counter. Higher strength preparations are available as prescription only medication. Codeine metabolises in the body to morphine, so it is not uncommon to detect both after the use of codeine.

MORPHINE:

Available on prescription only, although detection during a drug test may be the result of codeine metabolism.

DIHYDROCODEINE:

Available in numerous over-the-counter proprietary preparations in combination with paracetamol (for example, Co-dydramol). Higher strength preparations available as prescription only medication. Dihydrocodeine does not metabolise in the body to codeine or morphine.

Opioid analgesics may cause drowsiness, dizziness and affect the ability to perform skilled tasks. The user must not drive or operate machinery if they believe they are affected. Higher strength opiate preparations can produce physical dependence and withdrawal symptoms if suddenly stopped. They are also subject to abuse.

POPPY SEEDS:

Many breads, bagels and muffins contain poppy seeds, the consumption of which may lead to a positive drug test for opiates. Thebaine is another substance found in poppy seeds at low concentration and its detection in urine may be used to support a claim of poppy seed consumption. Due to the low concentration of thebaine in poppy seeds however, the interpretation of thebaine test results can be limited and the absence of this substance does not negate a claim of poppy seed use.

The EWDTS currently has no recommendation for using thebaine as a marker for poppy seed use. Whilst RTS does not routinely test specimens for thebaine we can offer this service as a supplementary test.

CONTACT DETAILS

Should you have any queries please contact your Account Manager, or alternatively use the below details

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