

Advice about buying self test kits for infertility

Worried that you might be infertile? Trying to get pregnant?

There are an increasing number of home self-test kits on the market of variable quality. If you think you have a fertility problem, might be pregnant, or want to get pregnant, you may be considering buying a self-test kit. Here are some important do's and don'ts.

Overarching message

Self test kits can have an important role to play in healthcare but should not be relied upon on their own. If you are worried about your fertility you should always seek advice from a healthcare professional. If you decide to self-test, buy the test kit from a source that you trust, read the instructions carefully and if you have any concerns speak to a pharmacist or your GP.

Primary messages

- A self-test kit should never replace a doctor's diagnosis. If you do use a self-test, it's important to follow up the results and check any concerns you may have with a healthcare professional.
- Whether buying from the high street or online, only buy a test from a source that you trust, see <http://www.mhra.gov.uk/buyingdevicesonline> The self-test kit should be sealed without any damage to the packaging and be within the expiry date.
- Read the instructions of the self-test kit thoroughly and ensure you have everything you need in order to take the test properly.
- If you have concerns about the quality of a self-test kit, tell us at www.mhra.gov.uk

Secondary messages

1. When thinking about self-testing ...

You can get free access to high quality tests through the NHS.

If you are ill or if you are worried about your health you should consult your GP. Your GP can help you make decisions about testing and help you access further specialist tests, treatment or advice.

If you are taking medication or receiving treatment, this can sometimes affect test results.

Home testing can rarely exclude a disease and may not be as helpful as a GP consultation and laboratory testing.

Think about the possible results of the test and what you are going to do when you have the result – whether it is positive or negative.

If you do want to self-test, here are a few points that you should consider.

2. Before buying a test ...

Whether you are buying from the high street or online, only buy a test from a source that you trust.

Ask a healthcare professional e.g. a pharmacist, practice nurse, GP to help you select the best test for you.

Do not buy the test if it looks damaged or the seals are broken.

Make sure the test has a CE mark. A CE mark means that the device meets the relevant regulatory requirements and, when used as intended, works properly and is acceptably safe.

But remember - a CE Mark alone is no guarantee that a home test will be suitable for your health needs and if you have any concerns about your health you should always seek advice from a healthcare professional.

No test kit is 100% reliable.

3. Before using the test ...

Be sure that the kit contains everything you need.

Make sure you have everything else you need (for example, some tests need running water or a timer).

Read the instructions carefully:

Make sure you perform the test according to the instructions for use
Make sure you know how the test should be stored
Make sure you know how to read the test result
Make sure you know what the result means
Make sure you know how the test is disposed of after use

Know who to consult for help if you need it when you know the result.

4. After using the test ...

Remember, no test kit is 100% reliable. Regardless of the result, if your concerns/symptoms persist, contact your GP or another healthcare professional.

October 2012