

Breath Alcohol Self-Test

admin · Monday, June 23rd, 2008



An estimate of your blood alcohol concentration (BAC) is determined with a breath alcohol test. This test measures the amount of alcohol in the air stream that you breathe out (exhale). A simple hand-held device is available enabling you to measure breath alcohol level on yourself. The device can provide a correct estimate of your blood alcohol level if calibrated and used in accordance to the manufacturers instructions. This home machine is similar to, though not as exact as, the type of test used by police for suspected drunk drivers.

Your blood alcohol concentration begins to rise within minutes of alcohol consumption. Alcohol is absorbed directly through the walls of the stomach, going into the bloodstream, traveling throughout your body and to your brain. This direct line allows blood alcohol levels to increase quickly.

Alcohol levels in your blood reach its highest level approximately 60 minutes after being consumed. However, food in your stomach may slow down the absorption rate, taking it longer for the blood alcohol to reach its highest level. Alcohol is mostly broken down in the liver and the rest of it is passed out of your body in urine and your exhaled breath. You can purchase breath alcohol devices to measure your breath level at many pharmacies or through the Internet.

The manual appliance is a glass tube (or a balloon and a glass tube) that contains color changing crystals activated when exposed to alcohol from your breath. This device is easier and less expensive than electronic meters.

The electronic meter displays the blood alcohol concentration (BAC) percentage in a digital display window after the glass mouthpiece attached to the meter is used. This type of meter is more expensive than the manual type.

More and more restaurants and bars are offering the use of one of

these two breath test methods at no charge for customers. These devices are also instrumental in alcohol rehabilitation facilities and hospitals.

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