



HUMAN BIOLOGY

DRUG TESTS

1. Where are drugs trapped? _____
2. If you used drugs four months ago, could they be detected? _____
 Explain _____
3. Explain how hair is tested:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
4. Name two other methods used for testing for drugs.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
5. Which test is best? _____
6. Name one controversy with drug testing hair. _____

Using Hair to Test for Drugs

More companies are testing hair samples from job applicants for traces of illegal drugs. How this controversial procedure is done:

Telltale traces trapped
 Drug traveling through bloodstream is trapped permanently by follicle inside core of hair strand

The test

- Hair is snipped close to scalp at crown of head
- Lab washes hair, then dissolves it with enzyme
- Chemical test looks for drug traces in solution
- If first test indicates possible drugs, a more precise mass spectrometer test is performed

Urine test still tops
 Types of drug tests used by employers, from a survey of 628 companies:

92%	Use urine test
79%	Urine test only
15%	Use blood test
2%	Use hair test
1%	Blood test only
0.5%	Hair test only

Controversy

- Thick dark hair, many scientists say, more likely to hold drug traces than light blond hair
- Exposure to drug without ingesting it (touching tainted money, for example) may produce positive test

■ Hair grows about 1/2 inch a month
 ■ 3-inch strand contains 6-month record of drug use

SOURCES: Harvard Magazine, American Management Association, Knight-Ridder Tribune