

Hormonal Contamination of Test Results

Guidelines for Providers and Patients

- ▶ Blood Spot and Saliva samples may be contaminated by exogenous hormones in a number of ways, and only trace amounts of hormone are needed to significantly elevate hormone levels in the sample tested.
- ▶ Identifying and preventing specimen contamination will save time and money for the patient, healthcare provider, as well as the laboratory.
- ▶ Healthcare providers are encouraged to contact ZRT physicians to discuss test results.

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| Common Causes of Hormone Contamination in Saliva Samples | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Hormones applied to the face/neck/chest within 3 days of testing ▶ Hormones applied to the inner arms/legs or other areas that may come into contact with face/lips/mouth ▶ Topical hormones used < 12 hours prior to sample collection ▶ Sublingual hormones used < 36 hours prior to sample collection (consider blood spot testing instead) ▶ Linens, e.g., pillow cases and bath/hand towels, not changed the night before collection |
| Common Causes of Hormone Contamination in Blood Spot Samples | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Topical hormones applied using fingers up to two days prior to collection (rub in wrist-to-wrist instead) ▶ Handling blood spot collection card before or after collection with fingers used to apply hormones |
| Other Exposure Sources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Close contact with family members or others using topical hormones ▶ Faucets/countertops/towels/doorknobs contaminated with topical hormones ▶ Applying topical hormones for others (e.g. hydrocortisone cream on a child) |
| Hidden Hormone Sources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Wild Yam” creams may contain actual progesterone (wild yam derivatives cannot be converted into progesterone naturally by the human body) ▶ “Phytoestrogen” creams may contain actual estrogens (listed as “phytoestrogens” or “natural estrogens” from herbal extracts) ▶ Some cosmetics, such as anti-aging/wrinkle-removing/skin firming creams, may also contain trace amounts of hormones (hormones in trace amounts are not required to be listed on ingredients) ▶ Placenta-containing shampoos and lotions (may be labeled “protein rich”) |
| Occupational Hormone Sources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Compounding Pharmacists/Pharmacy Technicians working with hormone powders and creams ▶ Estheticians, cosmetologists, beauty product consultants, and make-up artists applying/ displaying hormone-containing products/cosmetics |