



## Trace Element Test Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What is the difference between testing blood, urine, and hair or nail sample for trace elements?

These three ways are to test for your mineral status. Each type reflects a unique aspect of what is going on in your body.

**Blood sample:** A short and recent exposure to a mineral as it travels throughout the whole body.

**Urine sample:** Reflects the mineral level and toxic metals in a provoked patient.

**Hair (or nail) sample:** Reflects chronic exposure as the extra minerals are bonded into keratin.

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### 2. Is there any restriction on collecting hair or nail sample?

Yes. The hair sample has to be taken from 5cm away from the root of hair. Hair sample taken too close from the scalp usually comes with oily secretion or sweat which may affect the test result. Dyed hair, gel or polished nails will not be accepted.

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### 3. Is the Dental & Environmental Panel (U2) only for our teeth health and environmental issues?

In Dental & Environmental testing, mineral nutrients level is not included in the analysis; the main purpose of the test is to analyze a short-term exposure of toxin levels.

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### 4. How does this trace elements test help to reveal more about my health status?

The test can be able to test your Mineral nutrients level and toxic metal level at the same time. Testing mineral nutrients within could let us know the level of trace minerals in our body, help address the potential deficiency, while testing toxic metals indicate the chronic exposure to some trace elements, help the test clients to pay more attention to their surroundings, and avoid the intake of these toxic chemical, which may burden their health.

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## 5. What are the sources of toxic metal elements?

The most common heavy metal elements in Hong Kong are arsenic, cadmium, lead and mercury. Pollution from environment and chemicals have become a part of urban lifestyle. The recent food safety scandals have aroused concerns on chemical additives in food. These toxic metal elements can be found in water pipes, cosmetics, food or some herbal medicine, chronic intake will definitely burden our health, lead to an array of health issues.

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## 6. How long can the test trace back in your system?

An overview of chronic toxic metal exposure requests hair or nail sample for analysis. The growth of hair, finger nails or toes vary from person to person, in most of the case, an analysis of these sample can show the trace elements exposure in 3 to 9 months.

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## 7. How should I take my sample? How much sample is needed?

If you choose to test with **blood**, we would arrange a blood drawing session at our designated outlets. Please reserve your session 2-3 working days in advance. Each test requires around 10ml of whole blood.

If you choose to test with **urine**, we would send you a test kit. Please follow the instruction within and collect the sample by using the bottle provided. Each test requires around 15ml urine. When you finish, please place the sample back to the kit and return to our company.

If you choose to test with **hair or nails**, we would send you a test kit too. Please following the instruction within and collect the sample by using the bag provided. Each test requires a small bundle of hair with 5cm long, or nails (can mix with toe nail) equivalent to the size of a 50 cents coin. When you finish, please place the sample back to the kit and return to our company.

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## 8. How accurate is the test?

All sample will be sent to Micro Trace Minerals Laboratory in Germany for analysis. With the ICP-MS technology, the laboratory is able to determine the level or distribution of metal particles from the sample. Since its establishment, MTM has been specialising for mineral and toxic metal analysis for over 40 years. To ensure the accuracy and reliable testing protocol, MTM has joined the Round Robin Test (i.e. the comparison of analysis between laboratories by a third party laboratory). In the



comparison, the accuracy of MTM is found to be 100%! This shows that the measurement and analysis done in this laboratory is highly accurate and reliable.

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## 9. Has Micro Trace Minerals got certified?

Their analytical technique and equipment have passed the ISO/IEC 17025:2005 certification, recognize the ability of the laboratory to produce accurate results. In Germany, they are certified with AKS-PL-20918, and appointed by RECIEPE as one of the reference laboratories in 2011.

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## 10. Is the test suitable for all ages?

Both adults and children could do the test.

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## 11. How long does it take to get the report ready?

Generally, the report will be in about 2-3 weeks, including the time for sample logistics and processing.

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**Source of lab test provider: HK BioTek**