

All you need to know about Urine!

What is Urine?

Urine is a liquid waste product expelled from the body when you urinate.

What is Urine Made of?

Urine is mostly water (about 95% water), however, the rest of the contents of urine can vary depending of what you've eaten, drank, breathed in or been exposed to. The remainder of urine usually consists of urea, uric acid, ammonia, hormones, dead blood cells, proteins, salts and minerals, and toxins.

What colour should urine be?

Urine colour normally ranges between light yellow and dark amber. A change in your urine colour is usually due to something completely normal, but just occasionally it may be a sign that you should seek medical advice. The darker the colour of the urine, the more concentrated it is. Because people tend to sleep for several hours without having a drink, their urine is normally darker when urinating first thing in the morning.

Darker urine during the day or evening may be one of the signs that someone is dehydrated meaning they are not drinking enough fluids. Drinking lots of fluids will make urine lighter.






What affects urine colour?

Eating certain foods can affect the colour of urine though this doesn't happen in everyone. Taking certain medications can also affect the colour of urine. Certain vitamin supplements may also change the urine to a particularly bright colour. These changes are harmless and are due to colours in the food, supplements or medication. How much the colour of your urine changes will depend on how much food you eat or supplements or medication you take, how hydrated you are and on your own body chemistry.



Sometimes a change in urine colour is an indication of a medical problem such as a urinary tract infection, or kidney, bladder or liver problem.

These are some of the foods that may change the colour of urine:

Dark yellow /orange	Carrots
Green	Asparagus 
Pink or red	Beetroot, Blackberries, Rhubarb, dark red berries  
Brown	Fava beans / Broad beans, Rhubarb 
Orange	Rhubarb 

These are some medicines that may have an effect on urine colour*:

NAME OF MEDICATION	URINE COLOUR
Apixaban	If the urine is very dark, this may be because of blood in the urine. Notify the patient's GP immediately.
Aspirin	If the urine is very dark, this may be because of blood in the urine. Notify the patient's GP immediately.
Bismuth e.g. Pepto-bismol®	Dark yellow-Brown (stools may darken or even be black in colour also)

Chloroquine	Brown
Clofazimine	Red
Co-trimoxazole	Brown, Red or cloudiness in urine – seek medical advice as may be blood in urine.
Dabigatran	If the urine is very dark or red, this may be because of blood in the urine. Notify the patient's GP immediately.
Dantron containing preparations e.g. co-danthramer, co-danthrusate	Red
Deferiprone	Reddish-brown
Entacapone	Reddish-brown
Ferrous sulphate, ferrous gluconate, ferrous fumerate	Brown
Heparin	If the urine is very dark or red, this may be because of blood in the urine. Notify the patient's GP immediately.
Ibuprofen	If the urine is very dark or red, this may be because of blood in the urine. Notify the patient's GP immediately.
Levodopa containing preparations e.g. co-beneldopa, co-careldopa	Reddish/brown or darker in colour
Methocarbamol	Darker urine colour – Brown or Blue-green colour
Methyldopa	Brown or darker urine colour

Metronidazole	Dark yellow – Brown (darkens urine)
Nefopam	Pink
Nitrofurantoin	Dark yellow- brown
Paludrine	If the urine is very dark or red, this may be because of blood in the urine. Notify the patient's GP immediately.
Phenindione	Urine may turn Pink or orange. Dark red/brown coloured urine could be due to bleeding in bladder or kidneys – seek medical advice.
Quinine	May decrease quantity of urine produced so urine may be darker: Dark yellow-Brown
Rifabutin	Yellow/Orange/Red
Rifampicin	Yellow/Brown (darker urine colour)
Rivaroxaban	If the urine is very dark or red, this may be because of blood in the urine. Notify the patient's GP immediately.
Senna	Urine may appear yellow or red-brown
Sulfasalazine	Yellow-orange, Yellow-green
Triamterene containing preparations e.g. co-triamterzide, Frusene®	Urine may look slightly blue in colour
Warfarin	If the urine is very dark, brown or red, this may be because of blood in the urine. Notify the patient's GP immediately.

*Various resources used including BNF Nov 2017 and Medicines compendium (<https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/>).