



Frequently Asked Questions

the PortaSCC® milk test & the PortaSCC® Quick Test

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A. Introduction

The PortaSCC® milk test is a somatic cell count test designed to quickly check herd health right on the farm. It is available in two different versions—the original PortaSCC® milk test and PortaSCC® Quick Test.

Both tests are based on the same technology. Differences between these two tests are specified in the table below.

	the PortaSCC milk test	the PortaSCC Quick Test
Reaction Time	45 – 60 minutes	5 – 6 minutes
Test Instructions	1 Drop of Milk	4 Drops of Milk
	3 Drops of Activator Solution	4 Drops of Quick Activator Solution
Reader Availability	Digital Reader (optional) can be used after the 45-minute reaction time.	Digital Reader cannot be used. The PortaSCC® Quick Test is not designed for reading the results with the Digital Reader.

B. Uses

When do I use these tests?

The PortaSCC® milk test and the PortaSCC® Quick Test have many uses:

- Monitoring problem cows
- Checking at *Freshening and Dry Off*
- Monitoring sick and treated cows
- Monthly herd screening
- Screening cows at auction

B. Uses - continued

What if I already use a monthly screening program, such as DHIA?

The test works well in conjunction with monthly screenings (DHIA or other), allowing you to monitor a hot list or to test fresh and treated cows between screenings.

Can I use these tests to assay dairy goat and sheep samples?

No. For goat milk use the PortaSCC® goat milk test. There is no SCC test available for other animals at this time.

C. Test Principle & Relation to Other Methods

How do these tests work?

Both the PortaSCC® milk test and the PortaSCC® Quick Test are based on a chemical reaction between a dye on the test strip and an enzyme found on the cells in milk. The reaction makes the test strip sample well change to a blue color. The darker the blue color, the higher the cell count.

How do the PortaSCC® milk test and PortaSCC Quick Test differ from CMT?

The PortaSCC® milk test and the PortaSCC® Quick Test provide numerical readings for SCC and can detect much lower cell counts. They can both be used with quarter and composite samples.

How do the PortaSCC® milk test and the PortaSCC® Quick test differ from reference lab testing?

Lab instruments use a technique that stains and counts each cell.

How do the PortaSCC® tests compare to lab data?

In the lab and field studies conducted by major universities, the PortaSCC® milk tests show good correlation with lab data.

D. Kit Storage

How do I store the kits?

Store the kits at 2°C–25°C (36°F–77°F). Refrigerate if possible. Use by the *Best if Used by Date* on the back of the box.

E. Conditions for Running the Test

At what temperature should I test the samples?

We recommend testing the milk samples at a place where the temperature is between 7°C and 35°C (45°F and 95°F).

Can the test be done outside?

Yes, run the test in shaded area, out of direct sunlight.

E. Conditions for Running the Test - continued

Can I dip the test strip in milk or strip milk directly onto the test strip to run the test?

No, a specific volume of sample is needed for the test to be accurate.

F. Milk Samples

How fresh must the milk be?

The milk should be tested within 8 hours of sampling. Bulk tank samples should not contain any milk that is more than 8 hours old.

Will the temperature of the milk affect the test?

If the milk is refrigerated, allow it to warm to room temperature before testing.

Should I mix the sample before testing?

Yes, it is recommended that the milk sample be mixed before testing.

What happens if I add extra drops of milk to the test strip?

Your results may be too high. It is best to redo the test.

Can samples with preservatives be tested?

No. Preservatives interfere with the test.

Can samples with antibiotics be tested?

Yes. Antibiotics will not interfere with the test.

What if the milk is not absorbed into the Sample Well?

The test will not give an accurate reading when samples are not absorbed into the Sample Well.

G. Activator Solution

What if I add milk, but do not immediately add Activator Solution?

You should try to add Activator Solution within 2 minutes of adding the milk sample to the test strip. Otherwise, repeat the test with a new strip.

How long can the Activator Solution be kept and still be used?

If stored in the recommended temperature range, the Activator Solution can be used through the *Best if Used by Date* printed on the back of the kit.

Will the test still work if I accidentally put on more Activator Solution than required in the instructions?

Yes, but you should try to avoid doing that because the results may vary slightly.

G. Activator Solution - continued

Should Activator Solution stay out of the sun?	Yes.
Can the Activator Solution freeze? If so, what should I do?	Yes, the Activator Solution can freeze. If that happens, simply thaw the Activator Solution completely and continue to use.

H. Pipettes

Can I use the pipette or dropper, other than the provided, to run the test?	No, use only one of the pipettes provided by the manufacturer. They will form the size milk drop necessary to run the test.
How do I reuse the pipette?	After each sample, squirt any milk remaining in the pipette into a waste container. Then insert the pipette tip into the next sample. Squeeze and release the bulb 3 or 4 times before drawing the next sample into the pipette.
How do I store the pipette after I've used it? Do I need to clean it off? If so, how?	Rinse pipette with clean water by squeezing and releasing the bulb at least 5 times before storage.
How large is one drop of milk from the pipette?	35 – 40 microliters.
What if the pipette tip touches the Sample Well when I dispense the milk?	You may get less than a full drop of milk on the test strip. This will result in a low reading.
How do I get a full drop of milk onto the Sample Well?	Hold the pipette tip approximately ¼ inch above the Sample Well and gently squeeze the bulb; allow a full, hanging drop to fall into the Sample Well.

I. Test Strips

How long can I use test strips after opening the pouch?	We recommend using the test strips in the 2-strip pouch within 4 hours after opening. If you have a 50-strip bag, reseal the bag and use the test strips within 5 – 7 days.
Where are the lot numbers and Best if Used by Date for the kit?	The <i>Lot Number</i> and the <i>Best if Used by Date</i> are printed on the label on the back of the kit box.

I. Test Strips - continued

What if test strip is dropped/disturbed during color development?	If the test strip does not pick up dirt or water, it should be fine.
What if dirt gets into the Sample Well? Can I blow it off?	No. Do not blow on the test strip and avoid any visible dirt settling on the Sample Well.
What if the test strip was exposed to direct sunlight or high humidity? What if I left the pouch in the sun or inside a hot vehicle?	Make sure the Sample Well is not pink, and use the test strip as soon as possible.
What if the Sample Well appears pink when removed from the pouch?	A light pink color will not affect the accuracy of digital read. If the color is dark pink, please call your dealer/distributor or call PortaCheck at 866.500.7722 (US toll free) or 856.231.8894 (toll).

J. Blanking Strip (the PortaSCC® milk test only)

How many times can I use the Blanking Strip?	A single Blanking Strip can continue to be used as long as it is kept clean and dry, and the thick backing is not frayed. Store the Blanking Strip in its bag when not in use.
Should I add Activator Solution to the blanking strip when I set (blank) the Digital Reader?	No. A dry Blanking Strip must be used to set (blank) the Digital Reader.

K. Digital Reader (the PortaSCC® milk test only)

Is there a warranty on the Digital Reader?	The warranty on the Digital Reader is one (1) year after the date of purchase. Please call your dealer or PortaCheck for return authorization.
What happens if I push the up or down arrow button of the Digital reader?	Pressing the <i>up arrow</i> will place the reader in memory mode and allow to view previous readings that are automatically stored in the Digital Reader's memory. Then, using the <i>up and down arrows</i> will allow you to view previous readings. Once the reader is in memory mode, it must be shut off and restarted in order to read more test strips. Do not press and hold down the down arrow for more than 5 seconds. This will change the calibration of the reader and the 543 code will not appear when the reader is turned on. If this happens, contact your supplier for instructions.

K. Digital Reader - continued

How do I know if the battery is low?

A discharged battery symbol will appear on the screen.

What type of battery does the Digital Reader use? Where can I get it?

The Digital Reader uses a 3V CR 2032 lithium battery. It is common battery and can be found in most drug stores, supermarkets and consumer electronic stores.

How often do I have to clean the Digital Reader? How do I clean the Digital Reader?

You should not have to clean the Digital Reader often. If milk or dirt gets deposited onto the reader in the Sample area, remove the black reader cover and clean the optical window with a cotton swab moistened with warm water (blot off excess water before cleaning). Let the Digital Reader air-dry before putting cover back on.

What if I drop the Digital Reader?

Inspect for any physical cracks. Turn on the Digital Reader. If the message 543 still comes on, the Digital Reader is fine.

L. Reading the Results

When using the original 45-minute test, can I tell if a sample has a very high count in less than 5 minutes if I just want a yes/no answer?

Yes, a sample with a very high SCC count will turn the Sample Well blue within 5 minutes if all you want is a yes/no answer. You must still wait 45 minutes before using the color chart or reader.

What if the Digital Reader gives an E-2 reading?

If the Digital Reader gives an E-2 reading, the test strip was removed before a reading could be taken. Shut the Digital Reader off, turn it back on, blank the Digital Reader, and reinsert the Test Strip.

What does it mean when the Digital Reader displays either HI or LO?

Some versions of the Digital Reader use LO to indicate that the sample is under 50,000 cells/mL. HI indicates the sample is over 3 million cells/mL.

Why do I keep getting zero (0.00) or LO readings for my bulk tank measurements?

You may have:
1) used a sample that was more than 8 hours old
2) not inserted the test strip all the way into the Reader
3) added activator Solution to the Blanking Strip, or
4) not deposited a full drop of milk into the Sample Well

What if the result is zero (0.00) or LO, but the test strip looks blue?

Shut off the Digital Reader, turn it back on, blank the Digital Reader, and reinsert the test strip taking care to make sure that the strip is face down and inserted all the way. If the result is still zero (0.00) or LO, contact your dealer/distributor or PortaCheck.

M. Other

What if my question is not here, or I need additional information?

Please check our Web site or contact us by e-mail or by using our toll-free number **866.500.7722 (US only)**. For other areas, please use **856.231.8894**.