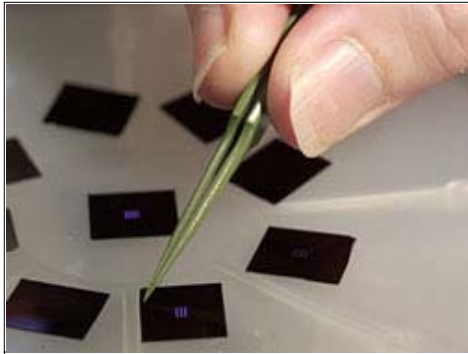


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## Texas Researchers Aim to Use Saliva To Diagnose Health and Disease

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AUSTIN, Texas—Innovative saliva-based health diagnostic tools will be developed by researchers at The University of Texas at Austin through a \$6 million, multi-institutional grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Saliva—with its slimy mix of proteins, hormones and antibodies—can tell a lot about a person's health, and it is much easier and less painful to collect than blood. But, the medical community lacks the technologies to perform large-scale salivary diagnostics.

With collaborators at three medical schools, Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry John McDevitt aims to develop lab-on-a-chip sensor systems for measuring important biomarkers in saliva samples.

The lab-on-a-chip technology was previously developed in McDevitt's laboratory and has been licensed to LabNow, Inc. Lab-on-a-chip systems are miniaturized biosensors that, coupled with portable instruments, promise to offer inexpensive, point of care medical diagnosis. The technology is being tested for use in the monitoring of HIV immune function.

"Through these efforts, we're trying to make clinical diagnostic tests more accessible, less expensive and less painful," said McDevitt.

The approach is consistent with the mission of the new Texas Institute for Drug and Diagnostic Development, with which McDevitt is affiliated. The development of these noninvasive oral fluid tests is also expected to provide more options for diagnosis and monitoring health issues in children, contributing to the new activities of the Dell Pediatrics Research Institute.

McDevitt will serve as the principal investigator for the grant, awarded recently by the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, a division of the NIH.

The cooperative research program brings The University of Texas at Austin together with the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, the University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville.

### Related Web Links

[Lab-on-a-chip](#)

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