Glucagon stimulation test – with cortisols

You will receive a separate appointment letter for this test.

What is a glucagon stimulation test?
Your doctor has referred you for the above test to measure your growth hormone and cortisol levels after stimulation.

Cortisol is the body’s natural steroid hormone. It is released from the adrenal glands which sit just above the kidneys. Its production is controlled by the pituitary gland which is a tiny pea sized gland just underneath the brain. Cortisol is a vital hormone that is responsible for enabling the body to respond to stress and illness and also regulates your immune system, blood pressure and blood sugar levels.

Growth Hormone is released from the pituitary gland. In adults it plays a role in maintaining muscle and bone mass, and affects the levels of body fat. Growth Hormone also affects energy levels, memory and your general feeling of well-being.

Do I need to prepare for the test?
You will need to fast from midnight the night before your test. Only plain water can be drunk during the fasting period and the test. Please bring all medication with you.

Females
If you are using the oral contraceptive pill, or HRT (including patches) you will need to stop them for six weeks prior to your test as they can affect results. If you are stopping the contraceptive pill you must use alternative contraception to avoid pregnancy. If you think you may be pregnant please let us know when you receive this information leaflet.

What happens during the test?
When you arrive at the Endocrine Investigation Unit you will be weighed and a cannula (a fine plastic tube) will be inserted into a vein in your arm, to allow us to take blood samples at regular intervals.
The cannula will be flushed with saline to prevent it from blocking. After the first blood test you will be given an injection of glucagon, which will stimulate your body to release cortisol and growth hormone so it can be measured. During the test you cannot eat and may only have plain water to sip. When the test is completed the cannula will be removed and you will be given a drink and a biscuit. You may also wish to bring a snack as you should not travel home before you have eaten.

**How long will the test take?**

Blood tests will be taken at intervals over four hours; you may expect to be in the Endocrine Investigation Unit for up to five hours. You may also like to bring something to read during your test.

**Will I experience any side effects?**

Occasionally some people experience nausea and/or vomiting around two hours into the test, but this usually resolves itself after a short time.

**When will I get my results?**

Results cannot be given out over the telephone and will be discussed at your next clinic appointment.

**Any other questions?**

Please contact the endocrine unit on 01223 217848, 09.00 – 17.00 Monday – Friday.

The timing of the test is important so please attend at the time specified on your appointment letter. If you are unable to attend your appointment please contact the endocrine unit to re-arrange it.

**General Information**

Discounted parking is available for patients attending clinic appointments over three hour’s duration. Please present your appointment letter to receive this.

Food and drink -there is a coffee shop in the treatment centre atrium and further food and drink facilities in the main hospital concourse.

**Privacy & Dignity**

Same sex bays and bathrooms are offered in all wards except critical care and theatre recovery areas where the use of high-tech equipment and/or specialist one to one care is required.
We are now a smoke-free site: smoking will not be allowed anywhere on the hospital site. For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169.

Other formats:

If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio, please ask the department where you are being treated, to contact the patient information team: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk.

Please note: We do not currently hold many leaflets in other languages; written translation requests are funded and agreed by the department who has authored the leaflet.

Document history

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